

Imam Zakaria Academy

Independent School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	316/6063
Unique Reference Number	134577
Inspection number	330406
Inspection dates	20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Dr Ramesh Kapadia

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.

This was a light touch inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Imam Zakariya Academy is an independent day school for boys and girls aged between 5 and 11 years. It had a class in Year 7 but this has now ceased. The school was set up in September 2003 and is situated in Forest Gate where it serves the Muslim community. It was inspected in 2006. The school aims to 'help each child to learn and develop true Islamic values and good character'. Its philosophy is centred on the principle that the memorisation of the Qur'an empowers the brain to learn more effectively.

It is housed within the premises of Forest Gate mosque. There are 116 pupils grouped into six classes. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average. All the pupils are Muslim and none has special educational needs; virtually all of them are bilingual. They attend the school for four full and long days, and a half day on Fridays. Islamic studies are taught in the mornings, which start early, and the secular curriculum is taught from 11.00 am.

Evaluation of the school

Imam Zakariya Academy provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and is achieving its aim that pupils should learn to recite the Qur'an very well. The curriculum is satisfactory, as are the teaching and assessment. Pupils exhibit good behaviour and are pleased to be part of this mutually supportive community, which provides very good spiritual and moral development. The school promotes pupils' welfare, health and safety effectively, having now implemented a suitable and careful recruitment policy. It has made improvements since the last inspection by acting on most of the recommendations. All but two regulations are met.

Quality of education

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. The morning lessons are devoted to a carefully devised Islamic programme which also includes some history and the development of general knowledge. The programme covers Qur'anic recitation and memorisation (hifz) and Islamic studies, including morals and manners. There are

lessons in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), history, geography, and physical education (PE). A cross-curricular approach is evolving to match all national framework requirements, however, art is not taught at present and technology is limited to ICT; this limits the creative and aesthetic areas of experience.

The school has a brief curriculum policy. It has adapted suitable commercial schemes of work in order to teach the core subjects. It implements some key aspects of the national numeracy and literacy strategies such as the 3-part lesson. Teachers' long and medium-term plans are satisfactory and provide a suitable basis for their daily planning.

The school has begun to plan links between the Islamic programme and personal, social and health education (PSHE), which is taught as a discrete subject to all classes. However, it has not given sufficient attention to planning the use of ICT across the curriculum. Provision for PE is satisfactory, but is limited by the range of facilities available. Overall, the curriculum is supported by resources that are barely adequate in range, quantity and quality. The school's extra-curricular programme is limited and there are no after-school clubs, apart from booster classes. Parents and pupils are supportive of the school but a few noted their concerns about these two aspects in their replies to questionnaires.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory. Pupils from each year group are taught in separate classes for the secular curriculum but are grouped by ability for Islamic studies. They are taught by specialist teachers in Islamic subjects where they learn the Qur'an; some outstanding lessons were seen. Teachers in this area have specialist knowledge and provide secure role models for pupils to learn from and emulate; they make effective use of assessment to plan work that matches the needs of individual pupils closely. These features, alongside the very successful use of traditional methods and high expectations, result in pupils making good progress in reciting the Qur'an. In the secular curriculum, the planning is generally sufficiently detailed to support the teaching. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and a variety of methods are used to sustain their interest, including paired work and role play, although they are not always well evaluated at the end of the lesson. In some lessons the balance of activities is less well planned and teachers talk for most of the lesson.

The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is average. Year 6 pupils were entered for externally assessed national tests for the first time last year; half attained at the expected level in English, but over three quarters attained that level in mathematics and science. Overall, pupils' progress is satisfactory.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. The school places great emphasis on the spiritual development of its pupils and prayers are an integral part of the school day. Assemblies provide a good start to the day with opportunities for quiet reflection, supplications in Arabic and prayer.

The well-structured Islamic and Qur'anic studies curriculum makes an important contribution in this regard and is an enjoyable part of the day for many pupils. They develop a strong sense of Islamic values, including morality, and apply them in their relationships with each other. Adults in the school work hard to build the self-confidence and self-esteem of the pupils, who learn the importance of supplication in daily life. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and they move around the school in a calm and orderly fashion.

There are a few opportunities for pupils to take on more responsibility as they grow older, such as in mentoring younger pupils, and in doing so they make an important contribution to the life of the school. They relate positively to each other and to members of staff. Adults provide good role models to pupils and treat them with respect and consideration. A relatively new feature is the school council. This is beginning to act as a channel to bring the concerns of the pupils to the attention of the school management.

Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. An appreciation and respect for other cultures is provided through subjects such as English. Pupils' awareness of some different faiths is developed in Islamic Studies. A trip was organised to Parliament and used to develop first-hand creative writing in English lessons.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. The school has appropriate policies and procedures in place to minimise health and safety risks to pupils. Healthy eating is promoted in lessons and fizzy drinks are banned in the school. The school has a written first aid policy and suitable procedures to deal with accidents and emergencies, with several members of staff who are qualified in first aid. Pupils feel safe and well cared-for and know whom to turn to if they have any concern. Some made a particular point in returns to questionnaires about the lack of bullying or racism compared to their experiences in previous schools. The behaviour policy is implemented throughout the day by staff. Pupils appreciate the reward system and the need for sanctions is rare.

The school maintains the admissions register in conformity with regulations. Attendance registers are maintained, however, authorised and unauthorised absences are not clearly distinguished in all cases. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and has implemented two improvements since the last inspection: a wall has been removed to enable better access and a toilet has been added. The school has not yet updated its overall school development plan.

At the time of the previous inspection there were deficiencies in the recruitment of staff but these have now been rectified. The school did open a Year 7 class but this has now ceased, partly because of a lack of space, which had been cited as a constraint in a previous inspection.

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 and teaching (standard 1) and must:

- provide creative and aesthetic experiences in the curriculum (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- maintain attendance registers in line with regulations (paragraph 3(9)).

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:

- develop ICT across the curriculum
- update the school improvement plan more regularly.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			√	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			√	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			√	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			√	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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School details

Name of school	Imam Zakaria Academy		
DCSF number	3166063		
Unique reference number	134577		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	September 2003		
Age range of pupils	5–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 79	Girls: 37	Total: 116
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2000		
Address of school	447-451 Romford Road Forestgate London E7 8AB		
Telephone number	0208 555 6258		
Email address	info@iza.org.uk; mm-aslam@hotmail.com		
Headteacher	Mr M Aslam		
Proprietor	Mr Z Ahmed		
Reporting inspector	Dr R Kapadia		
Dates of inspection	20 January 2009		