

The School of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector Daniel Towl

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A¹ of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is 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

The School of the Islamic Republic of Iran was opened in 2001 and is situated in Maida Vale in the London borough of Brent. The school is owned by the Iranian Embassy. There are 50 pupils on roll aged 6 to 14 years, though the school is registered for pupils aged 6 to 17 years. Most pupils are Iranian nationals and some have dual British-Iranian nationality. The Iranian national curriculum is taught in Farsi. English is taught as a second language and used alongside Farsi in science and mathematics for the older pupils. Many of the pupils will return to Iran to complete their education, which is one of the school's aims. The school was last inspected in April 2007.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Curriculum provision, teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. Most pupils do well in their examinations and make good progress, especially in English, where there are strengths in teaching. Parents and pupils express satisfaction with the school. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Provision for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory, mostly because the school has not kept up to date with the required procedures on child protection, vetting of staff and completing risk assessments. The overall quality of provision has declined since the last inspection. The school does not meet about a third of the regulations.

Quality of education

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and suitably broad. It meets all the regulations. Pupils follow the Iranian national curriculum which is taught in Farsi. Schemes of work follow, and are determined by, the Iranian national programme and a commercial English scheme. Good attention is given to teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Most pupils make good progress in these areas and achieve the higher marks in the regular termly and annual examinations. Pupils' creativity is promoted through story writing, art and some opportunities to take part in drama and singing activities. Pupils make

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

satisfactory progress in this aspect of their work. All pupils study the Koran and learn Arabic. Some of the older pupils go on to local secondary schools to study GCSE courses, while others return to academic schools in Iran for further study. Older pupils are very confident about their ability to move successfully to their next stage of education.

The English curriculum has a high profile and pupils make good progress, especially in their conversational skills and the development of their vocabulary. English is taught not only in specific lessons but also, for the older pupils, through the medium of science and mathematics. Pupils follow a scheme of citizenship education which enables them to study a range of topics including the environment, health, technology and food science, most of which relate to life in Iran. Other aspects of personal and social education are taught successfully during Islamic studies. Although the pupils take part in visits to places of interest, such as museums, there are no extra-curricular activities such as clubs. The physical education (PE) curriculum is underdeveloped; an area of weakness identified in the last inspection. Provision for design and technology is unsatisfactory, mostly because of a lack of attention to health and safety.

Teaching and assessment overall are satisfactory. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. In the best lessons teachers use questioning well to engage pupils in their work and because the classes are small, all pupils have the chance to contribute to discussions. This is very effective in helping pupils enjoy lessons and to develop their conversational skills, especially during English lessons. Teachers are open to listening to pupils' ideas. In a good mathematics lesson, pupils had the chance to find their own way to remember the properties of different shapes. Two pupils made up a rhyme together about the properties of a square. There is little detailed planning of lessons because teachers follow prepared Iranian schemes and text books. The small numbers in each class mean that teachers give significant amounts of individual help when required which helps pupils move on if they find work difficult.

Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but in only a few instances do they put helpful comments. Pupils are very aware of what the marks mean. In the best lessons, pupils receive good and appropriate encouragement and praise for their work. In PE lessons, although pupils are energetic, teachers do not give enough attention to developing specific skills, and in design and technology lessons older pupils are not shown appropriate ways to use some of the hand tools. Sometimes in lessons there are missed opportunities to allow pupils to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and levels of attendance are good. Pupils get on well with each other. Pupils say that the school is friendly.

Good relationships were observed throughout the inspection. Religious studies and the general ethos in the school successfully help to promote the spiritual and moral aspects of pupils' development. Overall behaviour is good and often outstanding in lessons. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are good. They work hard and are keen to do well. They are respectful of each other. Although pupils mostly get on well, some were concerned about the poor behaviour of a very small number of their peers, despite the school following its disciplinary procedures. Pupils said that, if they had concerns about bullying, there was always someone that they could go to.

Pupils make positive contributions in lessons and take part in music and drama activities, sometimes linked with the local Islamic Centre, and previously have participated in football matches. There are few opportunities to take responsibility in school and some pupils felt that their views were not listened to.

Visits to museums and places of interest help to provide an understanding of British culture and institutions, as does their study of English. There have been visits from the police and London Transport. However, there is no clear provision to promote engagement with the school's wider community. The citizenship programme and Islamic studies emphasise tolerance and harmony, and this pervades the school through the actions of staff and the behaviour and friendship of the vast majority of pupils. Pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy, Farsi and English effectively helps them gain skills which will support their future economic well-being.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Arrangements for promoting the welfare, health and safety of pupils are inadequate. The school has not updated its child protection policy to take account of recent requirements and guidelines. No member of staff has been designated as the person responsible for child protection. Staff have not undertaken the required child protection training. There is no evidence of staff having undergone enhanced criminal record checks. The school has a health and safety policy and a policy for pupils' outside visits but, in practice, there have been no regular or updated risk assessments completed for the premises or the activities undertaken. Neither the workshop nor the science laboratory has suitable arrangements for locking away hazardous materials and equipment. The first aid policy does not have sufficient detail and first aid boxes are not appropriately stocked to meet recommended guidelines. There is no record of staff training for first aid.

The school's records for fire safety are not kept up to date. There is no record to show that the recommendations of the last fire safety check have been carried out. Fire appliances have not been checked and there is no record that fire drills have taken place. Staff have not received training in using fire appliances. Portable electrical equipment has not been checked annually. Visits from London Underground staff have shown pupils how to keep safe when travelling. Pupils are not supervised adequately at break times when they can play outside and in the school hall.

Pupils have a satisfactory view of the importance of diet and physical activity to keep healthy and some pupils have snacks of fruit to eat at break times. There are regular physical education lessons which encourage pupils to be active. Some pupils said in their questionnaires that the school did not do enough to help them keep healthy. The school keeps records of the daily absence of pupils but does not meet the regulations for maintaining an admission register or attendance registers.

The school does not have an outline plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended by the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

All the staff have been appointed by the Iranian Embassy and have undergone Iranian checks of appropriateness to teach. However, there is no single central staff register to show that staff have undergone the required checks to teach in the United Kingdom. There is no evidence that criminal record bureau checks have been completed for all staff, volunteers and the proprietorial body.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises are suitable for the numbers of pupils in the school. The condition of the school buildings is satisfactory, though in some rooms the decoration is rather 'tired'. There is insufficient ventilation in the workshop to remove wood dust and it is not big enough for the number of pupils, as in one observed lesson, for them to work safely. The school does not have a designated room for pupils who are unwell.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides regular information to parents through daily journals and regular termly reports of their children's progress, including the marks from tests and examinations. The school has a number of key policies but at the time of the inspection no brochure or prospectus was available which outlined all the required information that should be available to parents, as listed below.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints procedure meets most of the regulations but the written policy does not state that one member of any panel must be independent of the running of the school, that the stage at which the complaint was resolved must be recorded and that outcomes are confidential. The complaints procedure is not made available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the 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 DCSF guidance Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education (DCSF-04217-2006) (paragraph 3(2)(b))
- ensure that appropriate risk assessments are completed before pupils take part in activities outside the school (paragraph 3(2)(c))
- ensure that a full range of risk assessments are undertaken and updated regularly in relation to the premises and the school's activities (paragraph 3(4))
- ensure that all the required actions in relation to maintaining fire safety including fire drills, risk assessments and staff training are undertaken (paragraph 3(5))
- ensure that staff have had appropriate training in first aid and that first aid kits have materials that meet national guidelines (paragraph 3(6))
- ensure that pupils are always supervised at break times (paragraph 3(7))
- keep a record of serious disciplinary offences (paragraph 3(8))
- maintain attendance registers and an admission register that meet all the requirements in accordance with the Education (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (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 ensure that all staff have had an enhanced criminal record check (paragraph 4(2)(b))
- ensure that the proprietorial body have had an enhanced criminal record check (paragraph 4B(4) and (5))
- establish a single central register of staff to show all appropriate checks have been undertaken (paragraph 4C(2) and (3), 4C (6) and (7), 4C(9)).

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

- ensure that the practical workshop is better ventilated and that numbers of pupils are restricted to minimise health and safety risks (paragraph 5(j))

³ www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm

- provide facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))
- improve ventilation in the workshop (paragraph 5(p)).

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

- the school's address and telephone number and the name of the headteacher (paragraph 6(2)(a))
- where the proprietor is an individual, his full name, address for correspondence during both term time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which he may be contacted at all times, or, where the proprietor is a corporation, a Scottish firm or a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office (paragraph 6(2)(b))
- where there is a board of governors, the name and address for correspondence of its Chair (paragraph 6(2)(c))
- a statement of the school's ethos (including any religious ethos) and aims (paragraph 6(2)(d)).

The school must also ensure that parents are aware that the following information is available:

- particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for admissions, discipline and exclusions (paragraph 6(3)(a))
- particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with statements of SEN and for pupils for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 6(3)(b))
- particulars of the curriculum policy of the school (see paragraph 1 (2) of the Regulations) (paragraph 6(3)(c))
- particulars of policies relating to bullying, health and safety, the promotion of good behaviour, and sanctions adopted in the event of pupils misbehaving (see paragraph 3(2)(a),(c) and (d) of the Regulations) (paragraph 6(3)(d))
- particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations (paragraph 6(3)(e))
- details of the complaints procedure adopted by the school, together with details of the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year (paragraph 6(3)(f))
- the number of staff employed at the school, including temporary staff, and a summary of their qualifications (paragraph 6(3)(g)).

And must also:

- publish on its website or, where no such website exists, send to parents of pupils (and of prospective parents on request) a copy of their safeguarding children policy as prepared under paragraph 3(2)(b) (paragraph 6(4)).

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

- ensure the complaints procedure is made available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils (paragraph 7(b))
- indicate in the written procedures that one person on the panel will be independent of the management of the running of school (paragraph 7(g))
- indicate in written procedures that written records must show at what stage the complaint was resolved (paragraph 7(j))
- indicate in written procedures that correspondence, statements and records are kept confidential (paragraph 7(k)).

In order to comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended the school should devise a three-year accessibility plan.⁴

⁴ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1

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	The School of the Islamic Republic of Iran		
DCSF number	304/6079		
Unique reference number	133385		
Type of school	Islamic Day School		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2001		
Age range of pupils	6–17		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 29	Girls: 21	Total: 50
Annual fees (day pupils)	£ 0		
Address of school	100 Carlton Vale London NW6 5HE		
Telephone number	0207 372 8051		
Fax number	0207 372 6367		
Email address	irischool@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Mr S Hosseini		
Proprietor	The Iranian Embassy		
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI		
Dates of inspection	27–28 January 2010		