

# Birmingham Muslim School

## Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A<sup>1</sup> of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005<sup>2</sup>, 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

Birmingham Muslim School is an independent day school that provides full-time education for boys and girls aged 4 to 11 years from families within the Muslim community in the Small Heath area of Birmingham. The school aims to provide its pupils with an excellent standard of education, and to strive for moral excellence through the teaching of Islam. The school was established in 2001 in a disused industrial unit and was last inspected in June 2007. The school is registered for 250 pupils and there are currently 90 full-time pupils on roll, taught in seven classes across the school. There are currently no pupils attending the school who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are a number of pupils particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are at early stages of speaking English.

## Evaluation of the school

The school has made good progress since its previous inspection and now provides a satisfactory quality of education for the pupils. However, there are important shortcomings in the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage which is inadequate. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and achieve soundly across the school. Nonetheless, further work needs to be done to improve some aspects of provision. The school has successfully created a sound spiritual and caring environment based on Islamic principles. There is full compliance with all regulations pertaining to the safer recruitment of staff and completion of the single central record of safeguarding checks. Staff care personally for individual pupils; however, essential elements are missing from the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety, which are inadequate. The school complies with most of the regulations.

## Quality of education

The overall quality of education is satisfactory, despite some important shortcomings in the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils enjoy coming to school, show respect for their teachers and each other and listen attentively. There have been clear improvements since the previous inspection to its curriculum

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

which is satisfactory. The school has also introduced an appropriate personal, social, health and citizenship programme (PHSE), which makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' satisfactory personal development. Furthermore there have been significant improvements to the Islamic Studies programme which now includes suitable schemes of work. This has directly led to pupils having increased opportunities to discuss their faith, behaviour and everyday events. Consequently, pupils develop a satisfactory level of self-awareness, sensitivity and respect for others. For example, in an Islamic studies lesson about dress codes, pupils were quick to point out that although they firmly believe in a certain code, people hold different views to their own and it would be wrong to criticise differences. They said it was better to 'agree to disagree' rather than impose their beliefs on others. The lesson also compared dress codes within different cultures and illustrated pupils' appreciation and respect for diversity in our society. The teaching of tajweed (recitation) also fulfils requirements and gives even the youngest children the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an.

The Islamic curriculum is supplemented, by a broad and balanced secular curriculum, firmly based on the National Curriculum. As a result teachers' long and short term planning is more detailed and has resulted in an improvement in the quality of teaching. Nevertheless the school is aware that there remains an over reliance on commercially published schemes of work that are not always appropriately matched to the pupils' needs, particularly in history and English. This has a particular impact on writing, because the teachers miss opportunities to consolidate skills taught in English lessons to increase the range and extent of pupils' writing.

Teaching quality across the school, although much improved, including that for the youngest children, ranges from good to inadequate; it is satisfactory overall. Assessment and learning are also satisfactory. Teachers of Islamic studies and Arabic have secure subject knowledge and set work that is generally appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. They use a range of suitable teaching methods which ensure that pupils of all ages make satisfactory progress in both subjects. Of particular note, in all lessons and subjects, is the positive relationships teachers have with their pupils and the effective use of praise and encouragement to motivate them. Nearly all lessons are appropriately planned and organised. In the best lessons, the pupils' work is matched well to their different levels of attainment, the teachers' expectations are high and their questions probe the pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking. These features were exemplified in a Year 1 English lesson on non-fiction writing. The pupils buzzed with enthusiasm when asked to use time connectives to sequence the life cycle of a butterfly, because they clearly understood the task and what it was they were learning. Consequently the pupils worked well and made satisfactory and occasionally good progress in acquiring new skills and knowledge. During these effective lessons, all pupils have many opportunities to work together or individually to discuss and plan their work. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. In the lessons where teaching is inadequate, particularly, but not exclusively, for the youngest children, teaching methods are not fit for purpose. Activities do not reflect or promote the learning objectives set. As a

result, pupils do not make enough progress and their interest wanes. On occasions the older pupils are given unproductive and mundane activities and this means that time is not used wisely.

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Their attitudes and behaviour are good and this is a strong feature of the school's provision. Pupils of all ages generally enjoy learning and this is reflected in satisfactory levels of attendance. Improvement in attendance is encouraged through a system of reward. In lessons the pupils work hard, try to do their best and respond appropriately to the support offered by their teachers. The pupils are unfailingly polite, courteous, and eager to talk about their work and are proud of their school. Since its previous inspection the school has made significant improvement in the areas of developing awareness of public institutions and promoting respect for different cultures. Both these aspects are now satisfactory. Much of the improvement has been achieved through increasing the number and range of educational visits and visitors. For example, visitors include people from different institutions such as the emergency services and visits include different places of worship. Discussions and debates on issues such as discrimination, racism and animal rights have helped pupils to develop a strong moral code and to respect the law.

Pupils' Islamic spiritual development is another strong feature of the school. The Islamic ethos and the teaching of Arabic ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of their Muslim beliefs and customs. Adults are positive role models for pupils and take every opportunity to stress the importance of good manners and kindness towards others. Pupils like the system of house points which result in treats and privileges. Islamic studies make a significant contribution to personal development and include topics such as care, consideration and citizenship. Consequently, pupils are keen to make sound contribution to the school community; they help others by carrying out monitor duties and other tasks with enthusiasm. Parents appreciate the beneficial effect the school has had on their children's personal development and behaviour.

## Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including for those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is inadequate. Although the school believes it is better than this, it is not, because too many procedures are not rigorous enough. There are some important areas where the school has failed to keep aspects of policy, procedure and training up to date, particularly in relation to first aid and its assessment of potential health and safety hazards. In some instances, however, the school has sound procedures including the testing of electrical and fire safety equipment. Nonetheless there are still some important maintenance issues that have not been addressed. These include missing protective covers on some fluorescent lights, upper floor windows that are unrestrained and some fencing that is in a poor

state of repair. The school's procedures for child protection are secure and members of staff have been trained to the required standards. The school has a plan to improve access for disabled users which complies with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2002. The plan relates appropriately to the aims of the school as well as considering the wider aspects of accessibility.

The promotion of a healthy lifestyle and the principles of social and moral responsibility are given a high priority, which are an important part of the teachings of Islam. Pupils benefit from a soundly conceived programme of visitors that deals specifically with developing their knowledge of how to stay safe. During break times pupils sit together and are provided with milk and fruit. These are pleasant social occasions and reinforce a positive attitude to healthy eating, although a few pupils choose to bring in unhealthy snacks.

### Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school fully complies with the regulations relating to the checks it makes on prospective employees and volunteers regarding their identity, qualifications, medical fitness and suitability to work with children. Details of the checks are appropriately recorded in a single central register.

### School's premises and accommodation

The school is located on the first floor of a factory unit, which requires constant maintenance. There are several classrooms of various sizes. Some are too small for the number of pupils being taught in them. On-site facilities for science and physical education are limited. Although the school has sufficient toilet facilities, it does not meet the requirement to provide appropriate washroom facilities for staff. The school does not have facilities for pupils who are ill. The proprietors recognise the limitations of the accommodation and are actively seeking funding to refurbish the building.

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

The school provides suitable opportunities to consult with parents three times a year. Parents receive at least one written report each year which provides them with a clear overview of their child's progress.

### Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written complaints procedure which meets the requirements.

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate, in spite of generally satisfactory outcomes. In many aspects of their care, children are cherished and they benefit from warm and trusting relationships with adults and other children. They are secure within the setting and have a strong sense of belonging. Children are happy, sociable, communicative and well settled within the school.

Lessons observed were overly adult-directed, lacked imagination and failed to engage all of the children. For example, at story time one or two children recounted the story of 'the gingerbread man' while other children were distracted by each other, several fidgeting and talking to each other and at times their behaviour became disruptive.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are inadequate because the quality of self-evaluation and quality assurance systems have too little impact on the overall quality of teaching. Moreover, the teachers' knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and how children learn is under developed. Consequently, children receive a restricted curriculum with too few opportunities for outdoor play. Activities provided do not always ensure secure coverage of the six areas of learning, nor are they personalised sufficiently in relation to individual children's abilities and their prior attainment. This is because, children's starting points are quickly but inconsistently assessed and are not sufficiently well recorded to provide credible evidence to support anything more than satisfactory progress. As a result, many children do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Many but not all the needs of the children are met. However, during the inspection a number of significant safety issues were identified some of which placed children at potential risk of harm. For example, razor wire hangs down from the fencing on the roof terrace and is accessible to the children. In addition, no one in the Early Years Foundation Stage has a paediatric first aid certificate leaving children at risk of not receiving appropriate treatment in an emergency.

## 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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<sup>3</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031910.htm)

- have full regard to the DCSF guidance Health and safety: responsibilities and powers (DCSF 0803/2001) by ensuring that all aspects of the school buildings and environment are free from significant hazards (paragraph 3(4)).

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

- provide washroom facilities for all staff (paragraph 5(k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l)).

In order to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure there is a balance of adult-led and freely chosen or child-initiated activities, delivered through indoor and outdoor play
- plan and provide a suitable range of activities for children, which are appropriate for their stage of development and based on their individual needs
- make sure that the premises, both indoors and outdoors , are safe
- ensure that at least one person with a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises at all times when children are present. There must also be at least one person on outings who has a current paediatric first aid certificate

## What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that teaching is consistently good across the school
- teach writing skills systematically across the school and provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length.

## 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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### The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?			✓	
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?				✓
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?				✓
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?				✓

## School details

Name of school	Birmingham Muslim School		
DCSF number	330/6102		
Unique reference number (URN)	133521		
Type of school	Primary		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	2001		
Age range of pupils	4–11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 52	Girls: 38	Total: 90
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1600		
Address of school	Bisley Works Golden Hillock Road Birmingham B11 2PZ		
Telephone number	0121 766 8129		
Fax number	0121 766 8129		
Email address	themuslimschool@yahoo.com		
Headteacher	Ms A Abdrabba		
Proprietor	Mr G Abdrabba		
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI		
Dates of inspection	16–17 June 2010		