

Islamia Primary School

Inspection Report

Local authority: Brent Council
Inspected under the auspices of: AMS UK
Inspection dates: 15 June 2015
Lead inspector: Mrs Hasina Varachia

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 -11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 418
Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Chair: Dr Ahsan Mirza
Headteacher: Mrs Zahida Shaheem
Date of previous school inspection: 15th September 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lead Inspector : Mrs. Hasina Varachia
Team Inspectors: Mr. Yusuf Seedat
Mr. Javed Pathan

This inspection was carried out by three inspectors. The inspection was observed by two officers from the Department for Education (DfE). Inspectors visited four lessons or parts of lessons including observing registration, break and lunchtime and the collective prayers session. They held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' written work, planning, the religious education (RE) and Islamic studies curriculum, the school's self-evaluation documents and the school's RE development plan. In accordance with the protocol that exists between DfE and AMS UK (Section 48), the Lead inspector looked at the school's recent Ofsted inspection report, which took place in February 2013.

The inspection team looked in detail at the following:

- The RE curriculum
- The progress pupils make in RE
- The quality of teaching in RE
- Leadership and management for RE
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including collective worship.

Information about the school

Islamia Primary is located in the Brent area of London but it serves the Muslim community from different parts of London. The school is a multi-racial community. All its pupils are of the Muslim faith. The school was the first Muslim school to join the Voluntary Aided (VA) sector. At the time of inspection, there were 418 pupils on the school register.

Inspection judgments

Overall effectiveness: the quality of religious education provided at the school.	2
The achievement of pupils in their religious education.	2
The quality of teaching and learning.	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of religious education, including the role of the school's governing body in RE.	3
The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development including the daily act of collective worship.	1

Overall effectiveness: the quality of religious education provided at the school is good because

Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching which ensures that pupils' learning is good.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they show very good attitudes to learning. Pupils are ambitious and have high expectations for themselves. Pupils' achievements are celebrated warmly in achievement assemblies. They are happy and caring individuals. Pupils demonstrate care and consideration for others when undertaking the many roles they are assigned, including masjid monitor and various classroom responsibilities.

The headteacher, other leaders and governors have a clear vision of how they want the school to be and are taking the right steps to achieve it. For example, the school identified a priority this year to improve RE provision and has taken significant steps to meeting this target.

A well planned programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision and a strong Islamic *tarbiyah* (development) programme result in very good behaviour and relationships, both in lessons and during social time.

Pupils feel safe in school and parents' views also indicate satisfaction in this regard. Relationships in school are excellent and pupils say that there is virtually no bullying in school.

Daily activities contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual development. These include daily *salah*, (prayers) and *duas*, (supplications) at the start and end of lessons and circle time.

The school curriculum is linked with spiritual values and Islamic beliefs. For example, during art pupils learn the *hadith* (saying of the prophet pbuh) *Allah is beautiful and loves beauty.* During the inspection, pupils took part in Ramadhan activities; these activities had clear links to national curriculum subjects.

The curriculum for Islamic studies, religious studies and Qur'anic studies fosters very good moral development and a sense of identity. Although, a more frequent and formal review of the curriculum is needed to ensure provision continues to be suitable for all pupils. It benefits from specialist teaching.

Regular opportunities for staff development include staff undertaking the Certificate in Education qualification accredited by Goldsmith University and twilight sessions on developing staff spiritually. These factors ensure that teachers are well equipped to share the school vision and values.

Pupils are given many opportunities to develop as British citizens and demonstrate their respect and learning of Islam through practical experiences. The range of opportunities to work with those of different cultures and beliefs is particularly noteworthy. Pupils visit various places of worship, take part in interfaith projects and welcome speakers of other faiths frequently to the school. Pupils work closely with local mainstream schools including Salusbury Primary school, Maloree Primary School and North West London Jewish Day School. Pupils have also participated in various sporting events with other Muslim schools and have performed exceptionally well. The school has also hosted visits from international schools including from Malaysia, Turkey and Singapore. Pupils celebrate diversity and challenge racism by, for example, taking part in Black History Month.

Pupils demonstrate concern and compassion for others who are in need. A number of reminders around the school promote such qualities further. The school has its' own food bank. The local community benefits from the donations on a weekly basis. Pupils and staff have worked hard to raise funds for Nepal, educational foundations and each class sponsors an orphan. These experiences enable pupils to show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of others.

Pupils are given opportunity to exercise democracy by taking part in the school council election.

Relationships with parents are very good. Of the parents who responded, they indicated that they are confident in the schools' processes and feel there have been improvements in the RE and in the Islamic studies curriculum. Some feel however, they would like their children to do more work at home.

The quality of collective worship is excellent; pupils participate with confidence, respect and sincerity.

Regarding safeguarding, inspectors noted a lapse in the application of procedures during the inspection. Furthermore, the school's policy did not fully comply with current requirements. There is no reason for inspectors to believe that pupils have been placed in any danger. However, school leaders, including governors must ensure that an appropriate safeguarding policy is in place and that this is fully adhered to by all. Although this factor still enables inspectors to judge that overall effectiveness is good, this limits the judgment that can be made for leadership and management to requires improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that an appropriate safeguarding policy is in place and that this is fully adhered to at all times.

Achievement of pupils at the school in their religious education is good because

Pupils of all abilities do well in light of their starting points. In Qur'anic studies, progress is carefully tracked and intervention takes place through booster classes when required. Effective training for staff ensures that teachers' assessments are accurate. Strong teaching ensures that pupils make good progress over their time in school.

Pupils' understanding is checked in lessons to make sure they understand all their work. Pupils are well known by their teachers and they receive good, targeted support to ensure that they learn well.

Pupils demonstrate their good knowledge in lessons and their work books are also testimony to their growing knowledge. For example, during Art Week, pupils produced calligraphy, models and title designs, clearly evidencing their progress. This was also a good example of teachers' planning. Pupils' achievements are clearly demonstrated in the numerous awards they have won. They include the Muslim Writers Award, Poetry Award and Writer of the Year.

The school also hosts a number of Qur'an celebration days and competitions where pupils have an opportunity to demonstrate their excellent progression in Hifz (memorisation of the Qur'an).

Teaching results in good progress being made in Qur'an reading throughout the school. Pupils learn their *duas* well and are able to read them in context.

Pupils' understanding of Islam and the world faiths is good. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make.

The quality of teaching and assessment in the school is good because

The good quality of teaching and assessment ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well. In the best lessons seen, teachers display good subject knowledge and the ability to communicate their enthusiasm to the pupils well. Lesson planning builds effectively on prior learning and consolidates it, helping pupils to prepare for the next stage of work. In these lessons, pupils' behaviour is excellent and the pace is brisk whilst giving pupils the opportunity to reflect on the work. Good questioning is used to promote higher order thinking and extend pupils' learning. Praise and encouragement help to build pupils' confidence and teachers often use Islamic terms. Resources are used effectively to support learning.

When teaching is good, coupled with positive attitudes to learning, pupils reach high standards. In these lessons, it is clear that teachers care deeply about ensuring that pupils are successful. Pupils are enthused and motivated due to the teachers' strong specialist knowledge.

The RE curriculum complements the rest of the curriculum well with teachers supporting other class teachers with Qur'anic *ayahs*, hadith and Islamic teachings on various topics. Pupils learn well about aspects of other religions because teachers regularly make comparisons.

Pupils who are at risk of not achieving their targets are monitored closely, with regular meetings being held between parents and middle and senior leaders. Parents meet staff regularly to share information about pupils' needs and achievements and to review progress.

Regarding marking, pupils' do not always receive clear feedback, so do not always know why they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Opportunities for pupils to respond to teachers' comments are not always provided.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that its marking policy is consistently followed by all staff.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of Religious Education requires improvement because

Senior leaders are typically highly qualified, generally well informed and ambitious individuals. The headteacher and other leaders based in school are positively supported by the Governing Body. Together, they have brought about a number of improvements in the quality of provision.

Leaders have a clear vision and strive for the best possible academic and personal experiences and outcomes for all pupils. Senior leaders articulate this vision clearly. The focus on developing the skills of teachers ensures that all pupils make good progress in RE, Islamic studies and in their learning of the Qur'an.

The Governing Body is committed to maintaining the school's Islamic ethos. Governors are involved in recruitment matters. They also attend school events regularly.

The RE lead in school is relatively new to the role and has worked hard to make improvements and ensure that curriculum planning is now more coherent, challenging and interesting for pupils. His role includes developing systems such as the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and he is receiving positive support in developing this aspect so that the quality of teaching can be improved further.

The senior leaders, including the headteacher know the school well and have identified the main priorities for improvement.

Many learning activities are provided for pupils. These opportunities extend and enrich pupils' experiences. The curriculum is well planned although more regular and formal reviews are needed to ensure that planning enables pupils to achieve outstandingly.

The school has monitoring systems in place which include book monitoring, planning scrutiny and observations. These have contributed to the overall improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, although book monitoring is irregular and would benefit from a more formal procedure of review to further improve teaching and learning.

Regular professional development opportunities are provided for support staff in developing spirituality and contributing to shaping the Islamic ethos of the school. New staff are well supported through a thorough induction programme, which includes an Islamic induction session. The twilight sessions and access to Islamic CPD (continuous professional development) online training further develops staff knowledge and skills.

The senior management team has a good relationship with parents. Parents of pupils from all year groups are part of the Parent Staff Association (PSA) which plays a very important and active role in the school. Parents are invited to workshops and regular

communication through newsletters ensures that they are kept well informed about school matters. Parents meetings take place three times a year.

Attendance is 95.4% and has improved recently. However, the school recognises that better attendance is required to improve attainment and progress. Punctuality is an issue and the school's procedures are not effective in this regard.

Although there are safeguarding arrangements in place, during the inspection those arrangements were not fully adhered to. However, the school took immediate remedial action to address the concerns raised by inspectors. The school has various documents related to safeguarding which refer to matters of policy and procedures. However, the school must ensure that these are regularly updated and compiled in a manner which allows information to be easily accessible so that all staff and visitors are clear about the school's policy and arrangements. As explained earlier in the overall effectiveness section, the safeguarding matter means that although this factor still enables inspectors to judge that overall effectiveness is good, it limits the judgment that can be made for leadership and management to requires improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the safeguarding policy is regularly updated, that the policy and procedures are clear, information on safeguarding is easily accessible and arrangements are always effectively implemented.
- Develop more effective strategies and initiatives to raise the level of attendance significantly and improve punctuality.
- Develop a more formal system for book monitoring review so that it is regular and more effective.

The extent to which the religious education curriculum meets pupils' needs is good because

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum for its' RE provision. The school appropriately provides pupils with knowledge and understanding of *Iman* (faith), *Ibadah* (actions), *Seerah* (life of the Prophet Muhammad pbuh), stories of the Prophets, *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet pbuh) and history as well as learning opportunities about other religions. However, learning resources, including those purchased recently, limit the progress the most able pupils can make to good. This is because they are not stimulating enough for the most able pupils so that they make outstanding progress.

Visits to places of worship and visitors into school enrich provision and promote tolerance of and respect for others' beliefs through enabling interaction with people of other faiths. Examples include visits to the local church and work with other schools. In discussion with members of the school council, pupils were clearly able to identify how to work maturely with those of different faiths, even when opinions on matters of faith differ.

Zuhr prayer (midday prayer) is conducted in congregation for boys and girls and primary pupils from Key Stage 2. All these pupils partake in *Jummah* (Friday prayers) and the school offers pupils suitable facilities. During prayer times, pupils partake respectively in *dua*. Pupils lead *salah* themselves from Year 3 upwards. Pupils take it in turns to call the *adhaan* (call to prayer).

Pupils show a very keen interest and enjoy their prayer sessions.

Whole school assemblies are led by pupils and this demonstrates their growing leadership skills. They also have the opportunity to recite *surahs* (chapters from the Qur'an) to gain spiritual reflection. Pupils also partake in performing *nasheeds* (Islamic songs), both within school and at events around London. Pupils also perform in school plays for parents.

Pupils learn well about the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and cultures. During the recent general elections, pupils learnt about the importance of elections and democracy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop a strategy to enhance the learning resources available for delivery of the curriculum so that all groups of pupils learn as well as they can

The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because

The overall provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Pupils' spiritual development is of an exceedingly high order. The school day and all lessons begin respectfully with *dua*. Each month, staff and pupils are presented with an Islamic value which develops spiritual understanding. Examples this year have included the themes of unity, cleanliness and kindness. Themed Weeks are also part of the school calendar and include *Seerah* day (life of the Prophet pbuh), *Hajj* (Pilgrimage), *Ramadhan* (fasting month) and Prophet Esa (Jesus). These provide excellent opportunities to foster a sense of Islamic identity.

The school provides many opportunities to explore values and beliefs across the curriculum particularly through RE, Islamic studies and assemblies which are linked to the Values of the Month. Examples include gratitude, kindness, forgiveness and respect. The links with other schools and with pupils of different faiths provide opportunities for interaction bringing awareness and understanding of pupils' own and others' beliefs, and respect and tolerance for everyone. These factors were clearly evident in discussions with the democratically elected student council.

The excellent role model of the Head of RE and the staff, together with the daily supplications and prayers in the revered hall of the mosque, contribute to the spiritual development of the pupils exceptionally well.

The school actively promotes moral and social responsibility through supporting charity projects. For example, there is a weekly foodbank where pupils bring non-perishable food during the week which is then distributed to the needy in the local community by the Parents Staff Association. Pupils and staff work hard to raise funds for various charities locally, nationally and internationally.

Pupils are from diverse backgrounds and this facilitates the fostering of a sense of community with common inclusive values that ensure that everyone, irrespective of ethnic origin, nationality, gender or ability can flourish. The annual inter-faith and cultural day organised together with the London Inter Faith Centre, situated close to the school, brings pupils from many other local schools together and further enhances the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Views of parents and carers

- Parents are supportive of the school.
- Parents welcome the opportunities for pupils to work with those of other faiths.
- Parents note the improvements made in the Qur'anic studies curriculum but feel that more can be done.
- Parents would welcome a variety in the range and quantity of work in Islamic studies that the school provides for home.
- Parents would like to see a greater range of Islamic extra-curricular activities, visits and special events offered by the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgments mean

Grade	Judgment	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	A school requiring improvement is not providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. AMS UK inspectors will make further visits until it improves.