‘O’ my Lord Increase me in knowledge’

Al-Quran (20:114)
Vision

Our vision is to provide high quality services and support for the development of excellence in Muslim schools; nurturing love of knowledge, continuous pursuit of taqwa (God consciousness) and Ihsan (excellence) in all spheres of life for learners and educators.
The Association of Muslim Schools UK (AMS UK) was established in 1992 to coordinate the work of Muslim schools and share best practice in advancing the education of Muslim children in the United Kingdom (UK). AMS UK acts as an umbrella body for registered Muslim schools in the UK, currently numbering 156 (2013), the vast majority of which are affiliated to it as members. A Muslim school is defined by having Islam as its religious designation (or character) which underpins its educational provision in terms of values and ethos.

AMS is officially recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) as representing the interests of Muslim schools and in providing support for its members to flourish in order that they make a tangible contribution to the lives and well-being of children and young people in the UK.

Our members strive to ensure that they work with and serve children and families from faith and non-faith backgrounds through direct education provision, charitable activities and joint initiatives with other service providers. The membership portfolio of AMS UK, across the independent, voluntary aided and Free School spectrum includes:

- primary schools
- secondary schools (girls and boys)
- residential boarding schools, some of which cater for post-16 provision that specialise in advanced Islamic study programmes

The curriculum provision, across our members, combines teachings of Islam alongside teaching of the National Curriculum subject areas within a faith-based context. Regulatory compliance and the quality of education in Muslim schools is monitored and evaluated through school inspections commissioned by the Department for Education, and carried out by either Ofsted or the Bridge Schools Inspectorate.

AMS UK is a member-led organisation and as such its leadership is democratically elected by its members. The members can participate in and contribute to the work of AMS UK by being elected onto the Executive Committee, which elects the office bearers, chairman, vice chairman and the treasurer.
Aims

• Ensure that the views and interests of Muslim schools are accurately and effectively represented to statutory bodies, educational organisations and in the wider public sphere; with demonstrable impact of their work rigorously evidenced.

• Encourage and promote education and schooling for Muslim children that is rooted in Islamic principles and values through the development of materials, resources and capacity building support for Muslim schools to grow and develop.

• Promote and enhance effective collaboration between member schools with a view to raising educational standards, nurturing creativity in the Islamic education pedagogy, developing a new generation of role model educators and nurturing excellence in the spiritual and moral character of their students.

• Provide a forum for discussion and unity amongst all those involved or interested in Islamic education that desire to make a difference to the lives of children, young people and families.

• Promote better understanding and positive relationships between different faiths and cultural traditions within the UK and contribute to the creation of a harmonious and cohesive society that is based on principles of mutual respect, justice and sound acquisition and application of holistic education.
Overview of Muslim schools in the UK (2013)

The first Muslim school, Darul Uloom Al-Arabiya Al-Islamia, opened in 1979 in Bury, Lancashire. Since then there has been a steady increase in demand and growth of Muslim schools, with Islamia Primary School in London becoming the first Muslim school to receive state funding in 1997.

Breakdown of Muslim children in Muslim schools by Maintained and Independent setting

- 5% Muslim children attending Muslim schools (24,708)
- 23% Muslim children attending Maintained Muslim schools (5,654)
- 95% Muslim children attending Independent Muslim schools (475,000 - approx)
- 77% Muslim children attending Independent Muslim schools (19,054)

Number of state funded school places for different religious ethos schools

- 39% Jewish Schools
- 33% Christian Schools
- 1% Muslim Schools

Number of Muslim Schools

- 14 Maintained Schools
- 142 Independent Schools
- 89 Primary Schools
- 67 Secondary Schools
- 70 Mixed Schools
- 52 Girls Schools
- 34 Boys Schools

Number of Muslim children attending Muslim schools by Maintained and Independent setting

- 5% Muslim children attending Muslim schools (24,708)
- 23% Muslim children attending Maintained Muslim schools (5,654)
- 95% Muslim children attending Independent Muslim schools (475,000 - approx)
- 77% Muslim children attending Independent Muslim schools (19,054)
What do we do?

Advocacy and representation

One of the core roles of AMS UK is to represent the views and interests of Muslim schools to the Department for Education, statutory bodies and the private sector where appropriate. The sphere of education attracts a broad coalition of partners across the public, private and community spectrum.

In this respect, AMS UK seeks to ensure Muslim schools play a dynamic role in nurturing talent, building stronger communities and contributing to economic well-being for all through partnership and advocacy activities.

An important aspect of this role involves participation in consultation forums on education policy and the dissemination of information from such activities to our member schools. AMS UK also makes written submission, where appropriate, to consultations on education policy changes, particularly those that may impact on Muslim schools and the provision of values-based, faith-sensitive education.

AMS UK has participated in many discussions on the subject of Islamic education and Muslim schools via television, radio and print media to not only demonstrate the positive impact of Muslim schools but to also counter the inaccurate and sometimes negative portrayal of Muslim schools across different media.

“Excellent and inspirational training. As a SENCO I feel more doors have been opened for me to support our pupils.”
Supporting and developing excellence in schools

Teacher development workshops
AMS UK provides a range of training sessions (INSET) for teaching and non-teaching staff throughout the year, which is offered at subsidised rates for its members. Training is mostly delivered through our regional hubs to reflect needs of schools and the teaching staff. Consistent themes of our training are aimed at:

- Improving teaching and learning within the classroom
- Organisation, management and leadership of schools
- Nurturing excellence in spiritual and moral character of pupils
- Ensuring regulatory compliance

These training events also provide important opportunities for our network of schools to share effective strategies and best practice for improving educational provision and standards.

School improvement
AMS UK provides a subsidised offer to member schools for them to access a unique School Improvement Programme (SIP) based on need and development trajectory. This programme provides a bespoke level of support from experienced school improvement consultants and/or school leaders from other AMS UK member schools.

Inspection support
AMS UK fully funds an inspection support programme (ISP) to members looking for an impartial critique into their regulatory compliance, quality of teaching and learning and other aspects of school inspection about which they may have concerns or seek to develop further.

Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) support programme
This is run in collaboration with the University of Gloucestershire. It is a tailored support programme for experienced teachers who are looking to gain QTS status through the Assessment Only route (AO). The programme also provides a subsidy towards fees and training for in-school mentors to support trainees.

National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)
At management level, school leaders from member schools can also benefit from the NPQH subsidy scheme which provides funding towards fees to gain the NPQH qualification with the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).

“I would like to congratulate AMS for organising such a fantastic conference. Masha’Allah! From the time we entered until we left there was a very positive atmosphere. The opportunity to network and meet staff from other schools was definitely an added bonus. The speakers were really inspiring, it was really motivating to listen to them and remind ourselves about what we are all truly working towards. Looking forward to the next conference insha’Allah.”
Networking and development

AMS UK provides information and support to its members through organising conferences, disseminating information and facilitating networking opportunities between members. Examples of this include:

**AMS UK Annual Muslim Schools Conference and Awards**
This event provides an opportunity for schools to come together to celebrate and receive recognition for their achievements and success stories. With guest speakers from the global Islamic education movement providing inspirational talks, attendees also have opportunities to participate in a range of workshops.

**Regional INSET**
Each regional hub (South, Midlands and North) arranges a specific day-long networking event with a bespoke menu of INSET sessions based on members’ needs. This event is attended by a cross-section of staff from Muslim schools, who hope to not only acquire knowledge and new contacts but also to identify ways to collaborate in order to strengthen the regional base.

**National Muslim Schools Leadership Conference**
This annual event focuses on leadership development within Muslim schools and provides a vital platform for school leaders to network and share best practice. Attendees at this event include head teachers, deputy heads, assistant head teachers, chairs of governing bodies and trustees.

“I have successfully completed my NPQH Alhamdulillah. I very much appreciate the financial support I received from AMS in order to undertake this journey. It would not have been possible for me to have done so without your support, from the application process all the way to completion. The qualification has given me the tools I need to become a more effective leader of my school and has had a positive effect on staff and pupils alike. Once again, please convey my gratitude to all at AMS for their help and support.”
Strengthening governance and accountability

The track record of AMS UK has provided an opportunity for it to be involved in key aspects of school governance; accountability and standards:

Effective Governance
AMS UK provides advice and training to member schools on effective governance and accountability which is aimed at school trustees, governors and school leaders.

Inspecting the religious character of schools
AMS UK is contracted by the DfE to conduct inspections of state funded Muslim schools in respect of their religious designation under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection focuses on the quality of educational provision in respect of the distinctive religious (Islamic) character and ethos within Muslim schools particularly curriculum, quality of teaching and learning and pupil development. Inspections are carried out on a 5 year cycle by trained and experienced inspectors.

Inspection of Muslim Schools
AMS UK, alongside the Christian Schools’ Trust (CST), is a promoter of the Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI). As an independent inspectorate BSI is approved by the DfE to inspect schools affiliated to the Christian Schools’ Trust and AMS UK throughout England. The majority of independent Muslim schools are registered for inspections with the Bridge Schools Inspectorate. Others, including all state funded Muslim schools, are inspected by Ofsted.

“I feel that I have benefitted tremendously from the mentoring service provided through AMS for the QTS programme. For trainee teacher, this type of assistance will provide more confidence especially for those who are doing assessment based route QTS”

Mohamed Zubair Mufaffer
Brondesbury College