



London Islamic School

Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 162 (A) of the Education Act 2002 as amended. Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) has been approved by the Secretary of State in the Department for Education (DfE) to undertake inspections in designated independent schools within membership of the Christian Schools Trust (CST) or the Association of Muslim Schools UK (AMSUK).

DfE number:	211/6390
Association:	AMSUK
Date of inspection:	7 th -10 th March 2011
Lead Inspector:	Mr M Thirkell
Team inspectors:	Mr I Hewitt Mr R Southey
Age range of pupils:	11-16 years
Number on roll:	118
Full-time:	118 boys 0 girls
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	None
Proprietor:	Esha'atul Islam, Chairman – Mr T Uddin
Head teacher:	Mr A Hadi
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The purpose and scope of the inspection

The main purpose of the inspection is twofold. It is to advise the DfE whether the school continues to meet the requirements for registration, and to determine whether the school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of its association. Ofsted monitors the work of independent inspectorates, including a sample of inspections, and you can find the latest evaluation of the work of The Bridge Schools Inspectorate on the Ofsted website.

Information about the school

The London Islamic School is an independent faith school which provides education for pupils from 11 to 16 years of age. It has been established on its present site in a relatively quiet urban street in East London since 1999. There are currently 118 boys attending. Most live locally but a significant minority of pupils travel from different parts of London each day. Most pupils who join the school in Year 7 have attained level 4 in English, mathematics and science in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need and no pupils are identified by the school as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. No pupils are identified as requiring support for English as an additional language, although all come from families with a range of heritages and many of the boys are bi-lingual. The school's core aim is described as 'to provide pupils with a broad education in a caring and well-ordered Islamic environment for boys to develop their academic skills and values in order to practice Islam with God-consciousness and sincerity'. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in February 2008.

Evaluation of the school

The London Islamic School meets its core aim and continues to provide an education of good quality overall. Pupils say that they enjoy being at the school and that they appreciate the support provided by their teachers. The school has the strong support of parents. There is a suitable balance between National Curriculum and Islamic curriculum subjects, although too limited progress has been made in developing the curriculum to improve opportunities for the pupils' aesthetic and creative development since the last inspection. Pupils make good academic progress as exemplified by the boys' attainment in the most recent results in GCSE examinations. Teaching is good in both National Curriculum and Islamic curriculum subjects, although the quality of teaching is occasionally restricted by the limited space in classrooms and the furnishings which constrain opportunities for organising activities. Strategies for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress are good. The quality of assessment has significantly improved since the last inspection, in particular with respect to the use of target setting and the involvement of pupils in reviewing their own progress. The quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good reflecting the school's founding ethos. Welfare, health and safety provision is satisfactory. Pupils are well cared for and all matters relating to their safeguarding are in place. Behaviour is good. Although the school has strategies in place for monitoring attendance, statistics provided by the school show

the most recent attendance to be slightly lower than the national average. The school meets most of the regulations for registration as an independent school.

Quality of education provided

The quality of the curriculum is good overall. Both the National Curriculum and the Islamic curriculum provide a broad range of learning experiences. These enable pupils of all abilities to make academic as well as personal progress and to grow in knowledge of their faith. The school's aims are clearly expressed through a policy which sets out the progressive nature of all aspects of the curriculum. The policy is prefaced, as are all school policies, with a faith text which emphasises the value of learning: 'A father gives his child nothing better than a good education'. Curriculum policies for each subject are reviewed annually.

The curriculum ensures that pupils of all abilities have the opportunity to develop skills in speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy through a range of activities planned within lessons. Although the school does not highlight any pupils as having special learning needs, the curriculum serves the needs of all pupils by providing good individual support as well as employing good systems for monitoring progress. The curriculum is supported by suitable schemes of work, which include detailed long and medium term plans for each subject and by teachers' short term plans. It builds on guidance from a range of documents and resources, including those specific to the National Curriculum and Islamic texts. The school divides the curriculum broadly between National Curriculum subjects in the morning and Islamic studies in the afternoon. The influence of faith is sometimes evident in the morning lessons. Work has begun to introduce 'Islamic Perspectives' into National Curriculum subjects where most relevant.

The school provides most National Curriculum subjects and the Islamic studies curriculum consists of modules covering *tahfeez* (memorisation of the Qur'an); *tajweed and qiraat* (correct recitation of the Qur'an and its rules and guidance); *aqaaid* (Islamic beliefs); *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence); *nahw* (Arabic grammar); *qasas* (Arabic literature); *sarf* (Arabic morphology) and *ahadeeth* (the study of the sayings of the Prophet). Despite the range of learning experiences provided by the curriculum, opportunities for pupils to develop aesthetically and creatively are too limited; this was highlighted by the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to illustrate their ideas in a range of areas of the curriculum and to be imaginative in creative writing, but the school provides too few opportunities to build on Islam's rich heritage in the visual arts and architecture in both aspects of the curriculum. Through the school council, pupils have requested more opportunities for aesthetic and creative experience in the curriculum. The school is clear in its aim of providing a faith-based education for the pupils, which is suited to British-born young Muslims who will be able to make positive contributions in the country of their birth. A key factor in this approach is that the traditional *Dars-e-Nizami* Islamic studies curriculum is delivered using English as the main medium of instruction.

Pupils have good opportunities to learn and develop skills in modern languages through Urdu and Bengali, but some, in particular those who do not have a family link to either language, say that they would like opportunities to study other languages. The school provides suitable opportunities for pupils to have regular

physical education (PE) and games through the use of local sports facilities. The boys play soccer and cricket and the school ensures that there are opportunities for team games with local schools, including an annual local schools athletics tournament organised by the school. The school development plan makes clear that the school intends to extend the range of sports available. The good provision of computers in the school ensures that pupils have regular opportunities to develop skills in information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is a strong feature of the school's provision. It is provided through regular lessons in citizenship and through the Islamic curriculum, for example through lessons in *fiqh*, which deals with issues relating to morality and social development. Pupils' personal development is further supported by a series of visits each academic year to the school by local police officers who provide guidance to pupils on a range of issues relating to their safety and education about drugs. Further support for pupils' personal development is provided through the curriculum, for example in a Year 7 English class where pupils were provided with guidance about the nature of drugs and the danger of drug misuse in the context of creative writing. Good opportunities for careers education are provided for older pupils through links with the local Connexions service and through work experience, which is arranged for all pupils in Year 10. As a result of the range of experiences provided and the skills they develop, pupils are well prepared for their future education and adult life.

The quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Their progress is confirmed by the most recent results achieved by pupils in GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4, which are significantly above the national average, in particular the number of pupils attaining 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics. Teachers work hard to support pupils throughout the school and this is recognised by the pupils who say that their 'teachers are always there to help them'. The positive atmosphere for learning seen in most lessons owes much to the positive relationships that teachers have with the pupils throughout the curriculum, including Islamic Studies. In lessons, time is generally well managed and teachers have appropriately high expectations of the pupils' behaviour, conduct and manners. The teaching staff are all well-qualified in both National Curriculum subjects and in Islamic studies and opportunities for professional development are provided regularly.

Lessons in National Curriculum subjects, which frequently begin with a short prayer, are planned carefully and structured to ensure that learning is developed progressively, although occasionally written lesson plans show too little recognition of the range of pupils' needs in the class. Questioning is generally used well to ensure that all pupils understand and are involved. In the best lessons questions are well matched to the individual learning needs of all pupils. In these lessons teachers use questions effectively to encourage pupils who are less confident as well as to challenge the most able. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson where imaginative use was made of simple resources to set a dramatic scene, challenging questions were used to draw all pupils into a creative writing exercise. Classroom resources are adequate throughout the school. Teachers often make good use of simple resources to support learning, although occasionally the limited space in classrooms constrains the organisation of activities. Good use is made of projectors linked to

computers to support pupils' developing understanding. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, ICT was used helpfully to support the description of geometric solids. Lessons in Islamic studies inculcate positive attitudes and behaviour through the use of traditional teaching strategies but also through the development of respect for religious texts and teachers. The teacher-pupil relationship that this produces ensures that most pupils make quick progress and that those who do not respond immediately are given the necessary support.

Strategies and practice for monitoring and assessing pupils' work are good in National Curriculum subjects and regular assessment is part of the teaching methodology evident in most lessons in Islamic studies. Monitoring and assessment have improved significantly since the last inspection. Procedures relating to the assessment of all aspects of learning are set out clearly in whole school policies, which include guidance on how marking and feedback should be provided for pupils. Tests are used regularly to reinforce learning and to prepare pupils for examination conditions. Strategies for monitoring pupils' attainment as they progress through the school and for setting targets for all subjects are rigorously and effectively applied. Each term pupils are involved in reviewing and assessing their progress and in setting new targets in each of their subjects through individual discussions with their teachers. Pupils keep records of their targets, usually on the cover of their exercise books, to remind them of their learning goals. Such strategies demonstrate clear progress in response to the last inspection. Reports to parents include National Curriculum levels attained as well as setting targets for improvement.

A marking policy, which provides guidance on marking pupils' work, is not yet followed consistently by all staff. Though work is marked regularly, written feedback does not always provide sufficient guidance about what is good about a piece of work or what needs to be done to improve the quality of the work further. On occasions teachers' handwriting is not sufficiently clear when providing feedback in pupils' exercise books.

The school keeps good records of levels of pupils' attainment. Details of their previous attainment are collected from primary schools at the beginning of Year 7. These provide a good basis for the school's own tracking systems. Teachers are provided with suitable information from the school's central data about pupils' previous attainment and progress in order to plan their lessons. Some lesson plans indicate that teachers, on occasions need more information about pupils' personal needs, which may impinge on their learning, such issues as their attention span or ability to concentrate. Nevertheless, teachers throughout the school demonstrate that they know their pupils well. The school is aware of the need to continue the development of strategies to improve the monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress, for example through the use of a wider range of data, including attendance records. Nevertheless, the assessment strategies used by the school have been a key element in the continuing improvement in the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 during the last 3 years.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils is good with some outstanding features. Pupils say that they are happy to be at the school, not

least because 'the teachers listen to us and care for us'. Pupils say that they would not change anything about the school. The school and staff are committed to developing the Islamic personality of the pupils to equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding of their own faith, the chosen faiths and lifestyles of others and the need to interact positively in British society. This is provided through both aspects of the curriculum, in particular through citizenship, history and religious studies. The introduction of 'Islamic Perspectives' in National Curriculum subjects supports this development. Teachers have already received in-service training to guide the development of elements of faith and culture across the curriculum.

Pupils' exploration and development of their own spirituality is encouraged throughout the school day in lessons and other activities in the context of their faith. For example, in a GCSE English lesson when the issue of 'absolute justice' and matters of 'right and wrong' were discussed in the context of the play *'A View from the Bridge'*, and whether human beings in any society could ever expect such justice in this world. The school has begun to identify where other similar opportunities would be used relevantly in the curriculum. Daily prayers and *zikr* (remembrance of God) sessions provide opportunities for communal and individual worship and reflection. Islamic studies lessons in particular frequently stress the importance of putting what they learn about their faith into practice in their daily lives, for the benefit of themselves and others. In another example, pupils were learning a Prophetic supplication which, the teacher stressed, was to ask for protection from wrongdoing, and the protection of others. Care for others is evident across the school. The role of older boys supporting their younger peers is reflected in the goals for the recently introduced school prefect system.

Pupils' moral development is assisted by the consideration of the differences between aspects of English and Islamic law. These are dealt with through examples from everyday life and being a law-abiding citizen of the United Kingdom. The school believes that preparing its pupils to be responsible, active Muslims is preparing them to be good citizens who make positive contributions to society. This is evident in lessons across the school day, wherein teachers link the faith of the pupils to practical examples in daily life.

The school is a multiethnic community, which provides a good base from which to develop the skills for interaction and engagement with the wider community in East London and beyond. Pupils come from families which represent a wide range of heritages and traditions. School trips, undertaken as part of the curriculum and for recreation, support the boys' growing awareness of the wider community. Links with local community groups and authorities such as the Metropolitan Police, sports groups, charities, visiting higher education students and work experience, provide good opportunities for developing pupils' awareness that they can make a positive contribution to British society. Awareness of cultures other than their own is enhanced through the curriculum, which provides an academic introduction to, and a developing understanding of, other cultures in society, for example through geography, religious studies and PSHE. Through Islamic studies pupils learn that there are varied cultural practices within the Muslim community. However, too limited access to artistic and aesthetic activities constrains their understanding of Islamic heritage, although awareness of the place of science in Islamic history is evident through displays in the school.

Positive relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils, reflect the founding ethos of the school. Teachers provide positive role models. Pupils put into practice the Islamic requirement to have respect for all elders and show concern for others around them. Behaviour is good around the school and most pupils greet visitors to the school spontaneously and appropriately. In general, pupils move around the school in an orderly way. This is helpful because of the number of stairs and levels in the school. Their understanding of the need to show concern for their own well-being as well as that of others is a key strength of their SMSC development. All pupils benefit from the opportunity to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence through the monthly 'Anjuman' programme of prepared speeches given by pupils to their peers and through the positive support they receive. Pupils are confident when speaking to the visitors either to explain their work or to express their feelings about the school.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The provision for the pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. Staff have a strong commitment to the well-being of the pupils who are well cared for. A full range of carefully written policies are in place, including in relation to health and safety. All matters relating to safeguarding are secure. A child protection policy is provided and an appropriately trained senior member of staff is the designated child protection officer. All staff receive supplementary training at the start of each academic year. Matters relating to fire safety are dealt with appropriately, including risk assessments, regular checks of fire fighting equipment, and guidance with regard to emergency evacuations. Records of fire drills undertaken each term include suitable evaluations.

Pupils are well supervised by staff, as well as senior pupils, at all times. The implementation of health and safety policies is rigorous in most respects and meets the requirement. Risk assessments for the classrooms and other areas are routinely and regularly carried out for the whole site each year and these meet the requirement. However, because assessments are not always carried out when classrooms are in active use this leads to an occasional oversight of risk, for example in relation to pupils' bags or trailing wires when projectors are in use. Assessments for trips out of school are thorough in most respects, although the school has not completed a written risk assessment for regular PE lessons undertaken out of school at local sports facilities. Sufficient staff are trained in first aid. The first aid policy is reinforced by signs around the school and first aid kits are positioned appropriately. An anti-bullying policy is in place and pupils say that although bullying is rare, they are clear that staff should be informed about such occurrences and that matters would be dealt with.

Attendance and admissions register are suitably maintained. Central checks are undertaken by the school secretary about reasons for absences on a daily basis. Nevertheless, average attendance is slightly below the national average for all schools. Accidents and sanctions for any disciplinary incidents are recorded in an appropriate manner. The school's behaviour policy is thorough and is implemented well. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good reflecting the good quality of relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils are respectful to their peers and adults.

The school encourages pupils to develop attitudes positive to leading healthy lifestyles. All pupils have PE and games each week. The school has recently improved the provision of healthy food that is prepared and delivered by an outside provider. Parents are appropriately encouraged to provide packed lunches that are healthy. However, the school provides insufficient guidance to the school council who run the tuck shop on what is appropriate to sell.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

The school carries out all the necessary checks on staff and a register containing all the required information is carefully maintained.

Premises and accommodation

The school is housed in two adjacent terraced buildings that are connected to form one building, which provides accommodation for the school and includes a mosque used by the public. Supervision of the common entrance area, which is used by the faith community at particular times of the day is appropriate, though the school recognises the need for a separate school entrance. The premises are well maintained and clean. An adjacent small public park is used at break and lunch times and for some PE lessons. The ICT suite has modern computers, which are networked and connected to the Internet. The school has a small science room which does not fully meet the needs of current numbers of pupils, although this will shortly be replaced by a newly built specialist science laboratory on the second floor. Current library space has similarly been improved. Floors are carpeted throughout and they are in good condition. Classrooms are well lit and the temperature comfortable for working. Although some of the classrooms are partitioned, low level extraneous noise from adjacent lessons does not cause pupils to be distracted from their studies. Classrooms are of adequate size but are at maximum capacity when used by the largest groups. Display is not used to support learning effectively and there are insufficient display boards. The school is aware of this and has already taken steps to ensure the provision of display boards in the newly refurbished areas of the school. Although not prepared on site, the school ensures that food brought as packed lunches or purchased by the school off-site is consumed hygienically at lunchtimes. A member of staff has completed a level 2 award in food safety in catering in order to supervise this aspect of the school day.

The school meet most regulations with respect to premises and accommodation, but facilities for pupils who become ill during the day are inadequate because the nearest toilet facilities are located on another floor of the building. Furniture provided in some classrooms is not appropriate as the desks and chairs are too small for secondary aged boys. Some traditional Islamic style furniture is showing signs of wear.

Provision of information

The school provides all the required information to parents and prospective parents through the school prospectus, the school website and by regular letters and other communications. Most parents say that they receive a good range of information. The prospectus gives clear information about the school as well as an insight into

wider aspects of school life. Key policies, including that for child protection, are available on the website and included in summary in the prospectus. The school makes it clear that copies of all policies and examination results are available in detail from the school. Reports about pupils' progress are provided to parents each term, including an annual report. These provide helpful information about their son's progress.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The provision for handling complaints is suitable in all respects.

Compliance with the regulations

The school meets all but three of the regulations for registration.

In order to meet fully the regulations in **part 3**, welfare, health and safety of pupils, the school must:

- implement fully the DfE guidance with regard to the health and safety of pupils on educational visits by preparing risk assessments for the regular off site PE and games activities (Regulation 11)

In order to meet fully the regulations in **part 5**, premises of and accommodation at schools, the school must:

- provide appropriate facilities for the care of sick or injured pupils that are reasonably near a water closet (Regulation 23(i)).
- provide furniture in all classrooms that is appropriately designed for the age and heights of the boys (Regulation 23(k)).

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Meeting the expectations of AMSUK

The school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of AMSUK.

What the school could do to improve further

As part of future development the school might wish to consider:

- reviewing strategies aimed at improving daily attendance, in particular with regard to pupils being absent from school in order to take holidays
- increasing opportunities in the curriculum for the pupils' aesthetic and creative learning.