

Iqra Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	2086394
Unique Reference Number	131524
Inspection number	316938
Inspection dates	20–21 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order 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

Iqra Independent School is a Muslim primary school providing for up to 120 children aged three to 11 years. The current number on roll is 114. This includes 21 children who attend the nursery and are funded under the Nursery Scheme. This provision was not part of this inspection. The school is situated in Brixton, within the London Borough of Lambeth in south-west London. It opened in 1994 and was registered in 2004.

The school aims to: *provide a high quality, trustworthy and sustainable Muslim education service; provide affordable education to families who live and work in the local area and; contribute to the local economy by providing opportunities for parents to gain access to education, training and employment.*

This is the school's first Ofsted inspection since it opened. An interim headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Iqra Independent School provides its pupils with a satisfactory education and good care. It meets most of the required regulations. The satisfactory curriculum provides a balanced range of activities. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. As a result pupils make satisfactory progress. The school enjoys a highly positive reputation amongst parents. The interim headteacher has identified the school's strengths through her effective self-evaluation. She, along with the trustees, is aware of the areas where the school needs to improve.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is an appropriate overall policy which provides suitable links to most plans and policies for the curriculum. There are good links between subjects and Islamic studies. The interim headteacher has ensured that there are already secure improvements underway. As a result, basic literacy and numeracy skills are covered and the curriculum is becoming more balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. However, the curriculum is not consistently applied across the school. Areas of strength include physical education (P.E.) where pupils receive sound opportunities for coaching in football and there are regular visits to a local municipal pool for swimming lessons. Good use is made of the local park to enhance outdoor games and for pupils to experience using climbing equipment. There are good examples of personal, social and health education (PSHE). For instance, pupils

have opportunities to take part in discussions, role play and drama. There is a strong focus on citizenship. There have been visits from the local MP, a Home Office minister and local councillors to talk with pupils.

Although there are some good examples of art around the school, planning is insufficiently detailed to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Arabic studies are satisfactory. Pupils repeat spoken words but with little understanding.

There are appropriate plans for visitors to come into school. For example, fire services and local police officers. The school organises suitable visits to enhance the curriculum including trips to London Zoo, the Museum of London, the Toy Museum, Science Museum and the local library. Although there is satisfactory provision for information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, there have been limited opportunities for developing skills or using ICT to support the development of learning in other areas of the curriculum. The school does not meet the requirement to support pupils of differing ages and aptitudes with special educational needs. As a result, there are significant shortcomings in providing support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. One pupil has been identified by the school and external services as requiring fulltime support elsewhere because of this.

There is satisfactory provision for out of school clubs. These include football, Sunday classes and Arabic. Homework clubs ran up to the end of summer term 2007 but because of the high turnover of staff there is now little provision.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching ranges from inadequate to satisfactory. There are a significant number of new teachers and staff who started at the beginning of this term. Therefore, the amount of experienced staff from which the school can develop effective teaching strategies to increase pupils' rate of progress is limited. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory when the plans are well structured and follow national guidelines. The teaching teams work well together in the different key stages and, by organising the pupils into small groups, there are suitable opportunities for them to discuss with a range of adults how to do their work. There are good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils.

Where lessons are inadequate, the planning and activities do not match pupils' learning needs. The slow pace and lengthy explanations by teachers hinder pupils' progress as they lose interest in what they are being taught and become restless. As a result, less able pupils are not always given appropriate support and there is a lack of challenge for more able pupils.

Assessment is satisfactory. The school has a good framework in place to support the assessment of pupils' progress. However, because of the recent high turnover of staff there are many inconsistencies in the application of these systems. Some teachers are using assessment information appropriately to inform their planning but

others are not. Consequently lesson plans do not always support the progress of individual pupils sufficiently well. National tests are used to gauge pupils' progress annually at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Optional national tests have been carried out in Years 3, 4 and 5. These indicate that pupils attain average standards overall and therefore pupils are making satisfactory progress. The few pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are not well served.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. Most of the school's provision is suitably taught through religious education (RE) particularly Qur'anic and Islamic Studies. Attendance overall is satisfactory and the school is making significant efforts to follow up on the families where attendance is low. Older pupils' attendance is better than those pupils in reception.

Pupils enjoy learning and benefit from the strong sense of Muslim identity with an emphasis on developing their full potential. The school positively reflects the immensely varied cultural diversity of the community that it serves. This enables the pupils to develop a positive but implicit tolerance and understanding of people from different cultures, religions and beliefs. The school is beginning to build on this powerful resource in an effective and reflective manner through celebrations of different religious festivals, and activities of different groups of pupils' and their families. Pupils are polite and their behaviour is good. They relate to each other and adults with care and courtesy. Pupils develop a good awareness of right and wrong. Staff are good role models and this enhances good pupil/pupil and teacher/pupil relationships. A very high proportion of parents are most appreciative of the school's ethos and support.

The school has worked hard to raise pupils' awareness of the work of local democratic institutions. To this end, there are good plans for pupils to visit the local council chamber to debate and meet with local members and also to visit the London Assembly. Current opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning are satisfactory. They contribute to their school community by taking responsibility for duties and daily tasks. Pupils have regular opportunities to practice their basic skills of literacy and numeracy to develop skills which are relevant to their future economic well being.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision welfare, health and safety of the pupils is good. Child protection procedures are robust. The school keeps good records and risk assessments. Appropriate precautions are taken to ensure pupils' health and safety both in the building and on school trips. Medical information for individual pupils is recorded well. This information is available to the appropriate staff. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and can talk to members of staff if they have any problems. The bullying records show very few incidents and these are tackled well.

The school's development of pupils' healthy living is good. As a result, pupils were able to tell inspectors about the disadvantages of fizzy and sugary drinks and the benefits of exercise. PE is well provided for and enjoyed by the pupils. The school fulfils its responsibilities with regard to the Disability and Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school carries out suitable checks on all staff, which ensures that there are no reasons for them not to work with children.

School's premises and accommodation

The site is situated in one building, which was once two semi-detached houses. Classes are in the basement and the three floors above. These provide sound, open plan learning environments for all pupils. The school does not fully meet several requirements in this section. They are; for providing access for pupils, including those with special needs, to enter and leave the school in safety and comfort, for providing a medical area for pupils who are ill and appropriately separate toilet facilities for male and female pupils. The school also does not meet the requirement to provide suitable toilet facilities for adults.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides appropriate and up to date information to parents, parents of prospective pupils and to others on request. The prospectus has all the relevant information. There is also a suitably informative website. The school provides parents with detailed annual reports on their children's progress and where they need to improve.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a clearly written and fair complaints procedure. Feedback from most parents indicates that they are aware of the procedures.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide subject matter appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of pupils, including those pupils with statement of special educational needs (paragraph 1(2)(b)).

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

- improve access to the school such that it allows all pupils, including those with special needs, to enter and leave the school in safety and comfort (paragraph 5(h))
- provide sufficient washrooms for staff and pupils, including facilities for pupils with special needs which take account of the Education (Schools premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph (5 (k))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph (5(l))

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the quality of teaching so it is never less than satisfactory with an increasing proportion that is good.
- ensure that the assessment of pupils' work is consistently applied across the school.

School details

Name of school	Iqra Independent School		
DCSF number	2086394		
Unique reference number	131524		
Type of school	Muslim		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	December 1994		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys:53	Girls:40	Total:93
Number of children receiving funded nursery education	Boys: 13	Girls: 8	Total:21
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2500		
Address of school	1-5 Gresham Road Stockwell London SW9 7PH		
Telephone number	02075019710		
Fax number	02075019710		
Email address	Firdos@iqraschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Firdos Qazi		
Proprietor	Mr Jamal Boakye		
Reporting inspector	John Seal HMI		
Dates of inspection	20–21 November 2007		