

Ayesha Siddiqa Girls' School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	307/6388
Unique Reference Number	135155
Inspection number	321016
Inspection dates	30 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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).

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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

Ayesha Siddiqah Girls' School is an independent school for Muslim girls between the ages of 11 and 15 years. It opened in April 2007 following its registration and it currently has 50 students on roll, from Years 7 to 9. It will expand into Key Stage 4 for the next academic year. It is situated in the centre of Southall, in the London Borough of Ealing, and it is housed within an Islamic centre. The students are of diverse heritages and come from various parts of London. The vast majority of them are either bilingual or are at various stages of learning English as an additional language. None has a statement of special educational need. The school aims to provide '*a balanced education incorporating Islamic beliefs and morals within a secure environment*' and '*a good quality learning experience leading to a consistently good level of pupil achievement.*' This is the school's first inspection report.

Evaluation of the school

Ayesha Siddiqah Girls' School is a new school that provides a satisfactory quality of education and meets most of its aims, despite deficiencies in some areas of its curriculum, teaching and assessment. Provision for students' welfare and personal development is good. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year and has identified the correct priorities for improvement. The school complies with most of the regulations for independent schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory as it provides a balanced combination of National Curriculum and Islamic subjects, giving students the opportunity to develop a wide range of basic skills and gain a good insight into their faith. The Islamic studies curriculum is centred on the study of manners and morals, Islamic beliefs, *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *hadith* (sayings of Prophet Muhammad) and early Islamic history. Qur'an lessons focus on teaching *tajweed* (a melodious style of recitation), with general explanations of the meaning of the verses learnt. All the National Curriculum subjects are taught, except for music, art and history. The planning of the curriculum is satisfactory in most subjects, being sufficiently detailed to support the teaching. However, there are no schemes of work in place for physical education (PE) and the planning of the geography curriculum does not ensure the progression and continuity of students' learning. Furthermore, insufficient steps have been taken to provide for

the needs of students who have been identified by the school as having moderate learning difficulties. Although the school provides support for them and monitors their progress, their needs have not yet been assessed by the appropriate authorities. Consequently, the school cannot ensure that their needs are met appropriately. Provision for English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), Arabic and Islamic and Qur'anic studies is at least satisfactory. Provision for design and technology/textiles is a strength, as evidenced by the quality of the practical and theoretical work produced by students and displayed around the school. Provision for PE is inadequate, as noted by students and parents. Resources are sufficient in range and quantity to teach most subjects and ICT is used regularly in most subjects. However, the science laboratory is not yet operational and there are no suitable alternative arrangements for practical science.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory and a small proportion of the teaching is good. In this early stage of its existence, the school has difficulty recruiting part-time subject specialists. There are sound systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to use the outcomes of the monitoring to make further improvements. The school has rightly identified the professional development of teachers and the improvement of assessment procedures as priorities. The headteacher has ensured that all teachers are aware of students' aptitudes and prior attainments. However, teachers' planning has yet to take this information into sufficient account to enable all students to make as much progress as they can. Furthermore, as teachers are not informed of the specific needs of students who have learning difficulties, they cannot meet those needs fully. There is an assessment framework in place to assess students' work regularly. Marking is regular and frequent in most subjects, and students receive constructive verbal feedback. However, not all teachers provide useful written comments to show students exactly how to improve. Although students are given targets for improvement in each subject, these targets are often too general to give students a clear picture of their next step of learning.

All lessons follow a three-part structure with an introduction, activities and a conclusion. Good teaching is characterised by thorough preparation, a very effective use of resources, a fast pace that sustains students' interest, a wide range of methods that matches students' various learning styles, and carefully planned tasks that provide a good level of challenge for all students. Where the teaching is satisfactory, it is based on adequate planning with clear learning objectives that are shared with students. However, in most cases, the tasks do not match students' needs sufficiently closely. Sometimes, the teacher's talking dominates the lesson, resulting in passive learning. Occasionally, time is not used wisely as the lesson does not start on time and the pace is too slow. Support staff are not always deployed effectively. All teachers are aware of the importance of raising the standards of literacy in their subjects and they routinely emphasise the key words needed for each topic. However, they do not plan how to provide students with the constant visual support they need to write independently and spell accurately.

As a result of the satisfactory curriculum and teaching they experience, students make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Year 9 students will be the first cohort of students to be entered in the Key Stage 3 national tests this summer.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

Whilst provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, the cultural strand is only satisfactory. The vast majority of students are happy to be at this school. Their enjoyment is reflected in their good attendance, their good behaviour and their lively responses in class. They value being educated in an Islamic environment and having the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of their own faith. They have high aspirations and most have a good attitude to learning. They are confident, thoughtful, courteous and friendly, and they form positive relationships.

The Islamic ethos and the programme of moral education help students develop a good sense of right and wrong and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour. Through the programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education, students develop an awareness of their own emotions and empathy for others, as well as a good understanding of responsible citizenship. For example, during the inspection, Year 8 students reflected thoughtfully on the rights of all children to learn in an environment free from bullying and on the responsibilities of all to safeguard the safety and dignity of each individual. They develop good basic skills that prepare them well for their future economic well-being, including team work, independent work and presentational skills. They have opportunities to fulfil responsibilities around the school. However, they have higher leadership ambitions and would like to have a greater voice. The school has already identified this and is planning the establishment of a students' council. In Key Stage 3, students begin to receive careers guidance, which is planned to expand into Key Stage 4. There are insufficient extra-curricular activities to help students develop further their physical, creative, thinking and social skills. This has been noted by many students and some parents.

Students are prepared for life in a multi-cultural, multi-faith society through planned assemblies, the citizenship programme and the Islamic studies curriculum. However, the school does not offer a sufficiently broad range of educational visits to enhance students' cultural awareness. This was noted by students and parents in the pre-inspection questionnaires.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

This aspect of the provision is good. The policies and procedures aimed at minimising risks throughout the school day are generally implemented well. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students have been reviewed to comply with the latest guidance. The school has a zero tolerance of unacceptable behaviour and does not hesitate to apply serious sanctions in extreme cases. Good behaviour is

promoted effectively through a well-structured reward system and instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Consequently, students feel safe. Their attendance is good. However, a few parents and students fail to respond to the school's efforts to promote good punctuality.

Students gain a good understanding of what constitutes healthy lifestyles through the curriculum. The school has rightly identified that opportunities for physical exercise are insufficient, as noted by many students and parents, and it is planning actively to rectify the situation. It is also seeking to improve the provision for cooked meals to ensure that these are nutritious and well balanced.

The school fulfils its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The recruitment procedures have been updated to comply with the latest guidance and a single central register has been compiled to record that all the required checks are made on staff before their employment is confirmed.

School's premises and accommodation

The premises have been refurbished to a high standard to provide comfortable, bright and spacious teaching accommodation that enhances students' learning. However, the science laboratory is not yet complete. There is a small playground that provides safe, outdoor play and which the school plans to develop to offer interesting physical activities.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

There is a wide range of up-to-date information for parents and others. Parents have two formal annual opportunities to meet their daughters' teachers to discuss their progress. They also receive two detailed annual reports. However, most teachers' comments are not subject-specific. Consequently, not all parents feel well informed of their daughters' progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has suitable procedures for handling complaints fairly and promptly.

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 appropriate planning for PE and geography (paragraph 1(2))
- ensure that the curriculum provides the opportunity for all students to learn and make progress (paragraph 1(2)(i))
- ensure that teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the students, and that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d))
- provide classroom resources that are of an adequate quality, quantity and range for practical science and PE, and ensure that they are used effectively (paragraph 1(3)(f))
- ensure that the information from assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that students can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)).

School details

Name of school	Ayesha Siddiqa Girls' School
DCSF number	307/6388
Unique reference number	135155
Type of school	Muslim day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	April 2007
Age range of students	11-16 years
Gender of students	Girls
Number on roll	50
Annual fees	£2,600
Address of school	165-169 The Broadway Southall Middlesex UB1 1LS
Telephone number	0208 867 9284
Fax number	0208 571 0241
Email address	adawood@ayeshasiddiqa.org.uk
Headteacher	Mr Abdullah Dawood
Proprietor	Islamic Educational and Recreational Institute
Reporting inspector	Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Date of inspection	30 January 2008