



Suffah Primary School

Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 109 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. 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: 313/6072
Association: AMSUK
Date of inspection: 20th - 23rd April 2015
Lead Inspector: Mrs Michèle Messaoudi
Team inspectors: Mr David Robotham
Mrs Huda Aslam

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11 years
Number on roll: 180
Full-time: 72 boys 67 girls
Part-time: 22 boys 19 girls
Number of pupils with an EHC plan or a statement of special educational need: None

Proprietor: Hounslow Jamia Masjid and Islamic Centre
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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 school opened in 2001 and is situated above a large and busy mosque in Hounslow. The charitable trust that runs the mosque is the proprietor of the school. The governing body includes the head teacher and trustees; four out of the seven governors are also trustees of the mosque. There have been many changes in staffing since the last inspection, affecting both teaching staff and senior leaders. The school was left without a head teacher for several months. The senior leadership includes a head teacher and a deputy head teacher who took up their posts in September 2014.

Pupils come from a wide geographical area and from many different ethnic and cultural heritages, including Bangladeshi, Moroccan, Pakistani, Somali and Sudanese. Most pupils speak another language in addition to English, and most are bilingual. At the time of the inspection, there were 49 pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) aged three to five; of these, 41 attended part time and 17 were in Reception. There were 43 pupils in Key Stage 1 aged five to seven; and 61 pupils in Key Stage 2 aged seven to eleven. There were no pupils with a statement of special educational need. None of the pupils was at an early stage of learning English. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2007 and by BSI in January 2011.

The school states its main aim as follows: 'Suffah Primary School is a place where we strive to achieve excellence. Children and adults are able to realise their potential for growth in an enjoyable, exciting, creative, caring and safe Islamic environment.'

Evaluation of the school

The school meets most of its aims. The proprietors and governors have ensured that all of the standards for independent schools are met. However, they have neglected to address a deficiency reported in the last inspection to fully satisfy the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The senior leaders and subject leaders have led the school well in challenging circumstances. They have worked extremely hard to maintain a good quality of education. Teaching is mostly good and enables pupils to make good progress in literacy, numeracy, humanities and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum is only satisfactory, despite the very strong provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT, and highly interesting topics in humanities. The school has rightly identified that the Islamic curriculum requires improvement to be on a par with the good provision for National Curriculum subjects and to raise pupils' spirituality. While the moral development of pupils is good, their

spiritual, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is mostly good and pupils show good attitudes to learning. Pupils are well prepared to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens. However, they do not have a broad range of opportunities to contribute to the wider community. While the provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory overall, their day-to-day care is good. Pupils feel safe and receive appropriate safety education. Attendance is below the national average despite policies to discourage absences. The premises enable safe and effective learning. The effectiveness of the EYFS is satisfactory and improving as a result of improved teaching. All the welfare and learning and development requirements of the EYFS are met.

Leadership and Management

The leadership of the head teacher, deputy head teacher and subject leaders has been very effective in maintaining a good quality of education in turbulent times. The senior leaders form a very cohesive team with the staff and have focussed on further developing the skills of teachers to ensure that pupils make good progress. The newly qualified teachers have received very effective support from the head teacher and their more experienced peers. The coordinators for literacy, numeracy, ICT and humanities drive curriculum change and ensure that pupils' learning in these subjects is coherent, challenging and interesting. The senior leaders know the school well and have accurately identified the main priorities for further improvement. The current parent-teacher association (PTA), which was formed in the autumn term, has very energetically helped the school to strengthen its partnerships with parents by re-engaging parents in school matters.

The proprietors and governors have ensured that the standards for independent schools are met. However, they have neglected to ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 by providing a written accessibility plan. This deficiency was already reported in the last inspection, which indicates that the systems used to check policies and procedures are not always sufficiently rigorous. Parent governors are particularly active in supporting the school and know the school well. Although proprietors and governors bring a wide range of skills to the school, there is no-one to support and challenge the senior leaders sufficiently in educational matters.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The effectiveness of the EYFS is satisfactory and improving. The pupils are visibly happy in the setting and enjoy a wide range of interesting indoor and outdoor activities. They are confident, respectful and considerate to others as a result of the warm environment and good Islamic role models provided by the staff. Pupils feel safe and secure and they trust the staff to care for them.

The EYFS meets all welfare requirements and pupils are properly safeguarded. Supervision is vigilant and risks to pupils' health and safety are properly assessed. Pupils adopt daily hygiene routines, washing their hands at appropriate times. They are encouraged to eat healthy packed lunches and snacks. The staff promote Islamic manners throughout the day, including snack times when pupils enjoy

socialising. Behaviour is managed well through positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

Teaching and assessment are mostly satisfactory and most pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Some make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In 2013 and 2014, the proportion of pupils who achieved a good level of development at the end of Reception was similar to national figures. Planning and assessment require improvement to help pupils to make good progress. However, there are clear signs of improvement in teaching, as evidenced by observations of sessions and analysis of planning and assessment documentation. The assessment of pupils' learning and development over time indicates that pupils are beginning to make better progress, as a consequence. The staff are suitably qualified and the staff to child ratio meets requirements. They have access to regular training to develop their knowledge of good EYFS practice and their teaching skills. In particular, they receive valuable support from the local authority, and they benefit from links with a local outstanding setting.

Review of the planning documentation clearly shows that the planning of activities has improved since the start of the autumn term. Planning now indicates how pupils will be supported to explore and investigate, concentrate and keep on trying, and think critically. In the autumn term, the staff learnt to assess pupils' starting points with more accuracy. They are gradually refining their understanding of planning a child's next step of learning through purposeful activities. They are increasingly planning activities that match the pupils' differing needs closely. The staff use the EYFS profiles and individual learning journals effectively to evidence and track each pupil's progress towards the expected goals in each area of learning. The tracking system is simple and effective in highlighting areas for improvement and strengths in each aspect for every pupil. However, pupils' next steps are not recorded consistently in the learning journals. Consequently, it is not always possible to check to what extent the staff use the information from their observations of pupils' learning to plan activities that purposefully help them to achieve their next steps.

The staff know their pupils well and follow the interests of the individual child. For example, when a Reception pupil showed a keen interest in volcanoes, he was supported to make a papier maché model of a volcano and to learn about volcanic eruptions. Reading skills are taught well by the teachers. In Reception, the teacher encourages the more able pupils to use words or sounds that they have read to form sentences of their own, which prepares them well for Year 1. However, not all teaching assistants support pupils' reading skills effectively. Some teaching assistants are very skilful, for example in developing pupils' mathematical concepts of size, length and estimation through practical experiences. Not all staff engage pupils sufficiently in conversation to help them to sustain an activity long enough to learn from it, and to support their language development. This reduces progress.

The curriculum is planned effectively to cover all the areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors, through a thematic approach. There is a well-considered balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Pupils have easy access to a wide range of resources. The learning of Reception pupils was recently enhanced by a visit to a children's museum where they made up stories with the accompanying adults.

However, opportunities to widen pupils' social and cultural awareness beyond the setting are limited.

Effective partnerships with parents begin with home visits before the pupils join the school. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress through daily contact, three formal meetings each year, and regular newsletters. Parents' views on how to improve the practice are sought regularly through questionnaires.

Quality of education provided

While the curriculum is satisfactory overall, it has significant strengths. It is broad and reasonably well balanced between all the required areas of learning. The strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy enables pupils to make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematics. Humanities, as well as other subject areas are taught through very interesting themes that enliven pupils' learning. For example, Year 1 pupils recently learnt about the history of the circus. Pupils develop a wide range of ICT skills through regular use of computers in different subjects. There is good provision for additional in-class support given to pupils who need it, as the school has recruited a high number of classroom assistants. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Through close liaison with parents and the appropriate agencies, these pupils' needs are identified early. Their learning is supported effectively by targeted in-class support and by individual education plans that are reviewed regularly.

The provision for science, art, design and technology and physical education (PE) is satisfactory. The school has rightly identified that pupils do not have consistent practical experiences in science to develop good enquiry skills. Pupils enjoy making 2-D and 3-D artefacts in art and design and technology, using a wide range of media. The premises limit the range of physical activities on offer. The provision for *nasheed* (religious songs) singing is weak, as it was in the last inspection, because pupils' singing skills are not developed systematically.

The curriculum for Islamic and Qur'anic studies, and Arabic is satisfactory and fosters pupils' good moral development and sense of Islamic identity. It benefits from specialist teaching. It is unclear at the moment in which subjects the 'reading' of Arabic is expected to be taught. With only one hour of Arabic being taught each week, the school may wish to consider placing this expectation in some of the Qur'anic classes also, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE) reflects the Islamic ethos of the school and actively promotes British values. The school has subscribed to a citizenship project with the local police to further its aims and provide pupils with first hand experiences of democracy. The PSHEE plans clearly indicate that pupils are made aware of the protected categories in the Equality Act, as appropriate to their age, and that they are taught to show respect for others.

The planning of the curriculum is mostly satisfactory. It is good for literacy, numeracy, ICT and humanities where it is coordinated very effectively. However, the planning of other subjects is not coordinated sufficiently well to ensure consistently good progression of learning from year to year. The Islamic curriculum requires

further coordination to build links between subject and topic areas, reinforce the key learning at appropriate ages and stages, and support pupils' spiritual development more coherently. The school has correctly identified that the links between PSHEE and the Islamic curriculum need strengthening to support pupils' spiritual development more effectively. Pupils' skills and interests are enhanced by a satisfactory range of clubs. Their learning experiences are enriched by educational visits that are adequate in range and frequency.

Teaching and assessment are mostly good and enable most pupils to make good progress. Analysis of pupils' work in books and folders clearly indicates that most have made good progress in writing, mathematics, ICT and humanities. Some have made outstanding progress. Pupils' work shows that the curriculum is covered very well in English, mathematics, ICT and humanities. The amount of science covered is mostly satisfactory as it varies slightly from class to class. Marking is regular and often shows pupils exactly what to do to improve their work. However, pupils are not always given the time to respond to teachers' written feedback. This reduces its effectiveness. Teachers consistently plan cross-curricular links that make pupils' learning more coherent and interesting. Pupils apply their mathematical skills regularly in humanities and science. Class teachers are skilful in extending pupils' writing and pupils are encouraged to write at length in several subjects. There is clear evidence of effective differentiation in most subjects, so that pupils of all abilities can achieve the learning objectives.

In lessons where the teaching is good, the planning is very effective. The learning process is sequenced methodically to ensure secure understanding of concepts and development of new skills. The teachers ask probing questions that make pupils apply effort and think through the answer. Pupils are given specific criteria against which they can measure their success. The teaching of reading places a great emphasis on comprehension. Resources are used very effectively to support learning. Classroom assistants are generally deployed well to support pupils and some are skilful at teaching, for example reading skills. At times, the subject matter is adapted by class teachers to include an Islamic perspective where relevant. The teaching promotes positive attitudes to learning and high standards of behaviour.

In lessons where the teaching is outstanding, it is characterised by excellent subject knowledge, exemplary questioning technique that helps pupils to review prior learning briefly but very effectively, and then build their knowledge and skills systematically, and a consistent level of challenge that enables pupils to excel.

In lessons where the teaching is satisfactory, sometimes the pace of learning drops when the time allocated to oral work is not sufficiently well balanced with writing tasks. Consequently, pupils do not have time to apply new knowledge and develop new skills well. On other occasions, the teachers do not always check pupils' work frequently enough to address errors or misconceptions. As a result, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. Classroom assistants are not always swift in identifying pupils' needs during a task. Consequently, pupils are not always supported sufficiently well to make better than satisfactory progress.

The teaching of Arabic, Quran and Islamic Studies is mostly satisfactory and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge.

The teaching encourages pupils to discuss topics of various types openly, and to question things freely, which fosters their self-assurance and develops their thinking skills effectively. However, pupils' learning is not always recorded in a structured way or marked frequently enough to ascertain pupils' understanding, knowledge and skills. In a very small minority of lessons, the work is not pitched at a level that is appropriate for some groups of pupils who only make slow progress as a result. Where the teaching is weaker, it is not always possible to manage pupils' behaviour well enough to foster sustained concentration.

All class teachers assess the learning of their pupils regularly and thoroughly, and they work together to moderate their assessments to ensure accuracy when using National Curriculum levels. They use the information from assessments effectively to plan tasks that suitably challenge pupils. In each group, class teachers establish pupils' starting points against which they can measure pupils' progress. There is an effective system to track pupils' progress from term to term and year on year, in reading, writing and mathematics, but not yet in science and other subjects. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' learning in Arabic, and Islamic and Qur'anic studies are not sufficiently developed to provide a clear picture of their progress. The practice of helping pupils to improve through the setting of individual targets is not consistent throughout the school.

As a result of good teaching, effective assessment and positive attitudes to learning, pupils reach high standards in their basic skills. Over the last three years, by the time that they leave Year 6, all pupils have achieved at least level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics, and most have achieved level 5 or 6. These represent good achievements for a non-selective school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

While the moral development of pupils is good, their spiritual, social and cultural development is only satisfactory. Pupils' moral development is promoted well through an Islamic curriculum that emphasises moral education and the teachers' daily role in fostering pupils' upright Islamic character. It is reflected in their good behaviour and adoption of the fundamental Islamic values of respect for others, honesty and sincerity. Pupils show good manners towards visitors by greeting them well, opening doors and sharing information positively about their school. The new behaviour policy supports the implementation of Islamic expectations and the promotion of British values. There is specific reference to rights and responsibilities that are also revisited during some *tarbiyya* (personal development) lessons. The *shura* council (pupil council) helps pupils to resolve conflicts through mediation and support. Pupils say that they do not 'blame'. Pupils show a good understanding of different forms of bullying and of potential grounds for discrimination. They feel free from harassment of any kind. By learning about slavery and the Civil Rights movement in the USA, Year 6 pupils gain an insight into the impact of discrimination on whole groups of people.

Pupils' spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily through daily recitation of the Qur'an, *du'as* (supplications), collective prayers, weekly assemblies, the Islamic curriculum, PSHEE, circle time and *tarbiyya*. The daily routines foster a sense of Islamic identity in pupils. However, these areas of learning are not sufficiently well

linked together to provide the consistent continuum required to promote good spiritual development. Furthermore, although pupils observe Islamic etiquette throughout the day, the staff do not set consistently high expectations in and around the school to sustain good spiritual awareness. Pupils' self-knowledge is developed effectively through PSHEE throughout the school. In Key Stage 2, PSHEE is based on a programme aimed at developing the social and emotional areas of learning (SEAL). Through the SEAL programme, pupils learn to understand, express and manage their emotions in an acceptable way and develop self-confidence. By being encouraged to discuss their views and justify them in Islamic studies lessons and circle time, they develop self-assurance. Pupils' involvement in self-assessment and target-setting also supports their personal development. However it does not happen consistently enough to develop regular habits of self-reflection and self-improvement in pupils.

While pupils' social skills within the school are developing well, they do not have sufficient opportunities to broaden their interactions with the wider community. Pupils respond well to the caring ethos provided by the staff and form positive and harmonious relationships with each other and the adults around them. They usually work well together and individually. They have participated in some fund-raising activities for people less fortunate than themselves. However, this work has been linked mainly to international crisis appeals and regular contributions to the local and national community are limited.

Pupils develop a good awareness of British democracy through the citizenship programme. They understand how they can influence decision-making through a democratic process. All pupils in the school have a voice through their *shura* council whose members are elected and meet fortnightly to discuss issues that have been raised. So far, they have been successful in improving school lunches and thinking about building up playtime resources. Through a politics project, Year 6 pupils develop a good understanding of the rule of law and of the general elections process. Local MPs from different parties have been invited and the school has taken steps to ensure that no bias towards a particular party will be presented. More work could be done through the curriculum plans to clarify for pupils that where the law of the land and religious law differ, British Muslims are enjoined by both the Qur'an and British law to follow the law of the land.

The range and frequency of enrichment activities support pupils' cultural development only adequately. Visits to Parliament, museums and the recycling discovery centre, as well as visits from police and fire officers, help pupils to gain a developing awareness of public institutions. Their cultural development is promoted satisfactorily through art, topic work and educational visits. Topics are sometimes particularly well chosen to widen pupils' horizons beyond their usual cultural experiences, for example the Far East, Ghana, the rainforest and fair trade. Pupils learn to appreciate that people in Britain may hold different beliefs from theirs through a programme of religious education taught from Year 3 to Year 6 that outlines the main features of the major world religions. Their tolerance of and respect for others' beliefs are actively promoted through interaction with visiting speakers from other faiths. In discussion, pupils show that they understand that tolerance and respect are vital in modern society. In lessons, pupils are constantly

challenged to ensure a balanced view that protects them from the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Although the staff provide good day-to-day care and the school complies with all the regulations, the overall provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils is only satisfactory. This is because the proprietors have taken longer than desirable to address issues related to the safety of the playground; and also because they still have not fulfilled their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and have full regard to the latest government guidance. All staff have had basic child protection training and three members of staff and a governor have been trained to standards for designated persons. The staff refresh their training at appropriate intervals and all have signed that they have read the first part of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. The school works closely with the local authority when dealing with any safeguarding concerns. The policies and procedures are reviewed annually and approved by the governors. The school has robust procedures for preventing extremism and radicalisation. It can demonstrate that it has taken appropriate action when necessary to protect the pupils from risks from radicalisation, in close liaison with the police and the borough. The school has planned to have staff trained in counter-terrorism by the police this term.

Risk assessments are thorough and pupils are taught how to keep safe in various circumstances. Parents, staff and pupils have received training in e-safety and the internet is properly filtered. Two members of staff have undertaken the specialist training in child exploitation and online protection.

The Islamic ethos of the school promotes an atmosphere of care, respect and consideration between pupils, teachers and parents. The school's behaviour policy is well written and implemented consistently. Behaviour is generally good, although some pupils can be boisterous out of lessons. The anti-bullying policy is effective and pupils report that bullying is very rare. When instances of bullying do occur, they trust staff to deal with them effectively.

Fire precautions and first aid arrangements are thorough and a high number of staff are trained in fire safety and first aid. Supervision is vigilant throughout the day. The admission and attendance registers are maintained properly. Despite policies that include 'same-day' contact for unreported absence and a target of 95% attendance, attendance currently stands at 92.4% and so is below the national average.

The school continues to promote healthy eating, through newsletters and notices to parents. Pupils enjoy well-presented hot school dinners in the school hall. The meals are nutritious and include food from various cultures.

A lift provides disabled access to the main school building. However, the school still does not have a three-year written plan showing how it will improve accessibility to

the premises, the curriculum and information for disabled persons, as required by the Equality Act 2010. This matter requires urgent action.

Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

All members of staff, and of the proprietorial body, have been carefully checked as required by the independent school standards, and the checks have been entered onto a single central record (SCR) in an appropriate manner. In addition, the checks made on all volunteers who work in regulated activities are included on the SCR as required by the most recent DfE guidance. The school also goes beyond regulatory requirements by making criminal background checks on volunteers who do not come into unsupervised contact with pupils. The deputy head teacher and one governor have had safer recruitment training and are involved in all appointments.

Premises of and accommodation at schools

The school complies with all premises and accommodation regulations. Effective measures are taken to ensure that pupils are kept safe when crossing areas shared with the mosque, such as the entrance and the car park. The teaching accommodation is self-contained with carefully controlled access, both in the primary and EYFS departments. The premises are maintained to a standard that ensures the health and safety of pupils. Classrooms are large enough for the number of pupils currently using them, but not large enough for any significant increase in numbers. The furniture and fittings of the school are of appropriate size and height for the age range. Specialist accommodation includes a prayer hall, an ICT room, a well-stocked library and a suitable medical room. There are appropriate arrangements to ensure that the food served in the school hall has been prepared hygienically. The premises are well lit and suitably ventilated. Displays in classrooms and around the school reflect the Islamic ethos and celebrate pupils' achievements in most subjects.

Parents have understandably expressed concern for some time about the uneven and dusty surface of the main playground. It is to the credit of the PTA that plans are now in hand to resurface this playground very soon. The school has further plans to improve the outdoor play areas that are currently only just adequate for PE and games. The EYFS outdoor area ensures safe and effective play and learning.

Provision of information

The school is now fully compliant with all regulations regarding the provision of information, which is an improvement since the last inspection. It publishes a prospectus annually and recently launched a revised website which is easy to navigate and presents up-to-date information clearly. There is also a good PTA website which helps to promote effective communication between the parent body and the school. Each academic year, parents are well informed of their children's progress through three formal meetings with teachers and three good-quality academic reports. The annual report provides particularly detailed information that includes curriculum levels achieved, sanctions and merits awarded, and progress in each subject area, as well as in personal development.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has appropriate procedures for handling complaints that comply with regulations. However, they would benefit from review of the time scales to inject a real sense of urgency in the resolution of complaints. These procedures are made known to parents and published on the school's website. One formal complaint was received in the last year and was resolved effectively by the Chair of Governors.

Compliance with the regulations

The school meets all of the regulations for registration.

The school does not meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. In order to meet the requirements, the school must:

- devise a three-year plan showing how it will improve accessibility to the premises, information and the curriculum for disabled persons, and regularly review it.

Meeting the expectations of AMSUK

The school's religious ethos broadly meets the expectations of AMSUK but in order to strengthen its religious ethos the school should consider:

- improving the coordination of the Islamic aspects of the curriculum to bring more coherence to pupils' learning and raise their spiritual development
- setting consistently high expectations of Islamic etiquette in and around the school
- further developing the tracking of pupils' progress in the Islamic aspects of the curriculum to provide a clearer picture of their progress.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- strengthening the curriculum by ensuring that all subject areas are sufficiently well coordinated to enable pupils to progress consistently well year on year in their knowledge and skills
- further developing the skills of teachers and classroom assistants throughout the school to ensure that all teaching is at least good and a higher proportion is outstanding
- providing pupils throughout the school with a broader range of opportunities to develop their social and cultural awareness
- raising attendance levels
- widening the skills of the governing body to support and challenge the senior leaders more effectively.