

Statutory Inspection of S48 for Muslim Schools Report

Al-Furqan Primary School

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Reddings Lane
Tyseley, Birmingham.
Postcode: B11 3EY
Local authority: Birmingham
Dates of inspection: 20/05/2010
Headteacher: Zahida Hussain
Inspector's name: Mohammad Ismail

School context

Al-Furqan is an outstanding Muslim primary school in Birmingham which was the first Islamic faith state primary school in the country. The school became part of the Voluntary Aided (VA) sector in 1998. The school is very popular in the city for its excellent *tarbiah* (spiritual and moral development) of pupils. Therefore, the school takes Muslim pupils from almost all localities and from all backgrounds. The whole school is a multi-cultural and multi-faith cohesive community. The school was last inspected for Section 48 in 2007 and since then the school has made significant improvements in its Islamic resource bank and teaching *tajweed* (the recitation of the holy Qur'an) despite an increase in numbers. At the time of the inspection there were 340 pupils on roll. The school aims to ensure the highest educational achievement of which each pupil is capable, by providing a broad and balanced education within the framework of the National Curriculum and Islamic values, regardless of racial origin, gender or academic ability.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Al-Furqan as a Muslim school is outstanding

This is due to the clear vision and strong leadership with a committed head and her Religious Education (RE) team for the provision of Islamic studies. The team is fully supported by the governing body. All members of the teaching staff in the RE team are subject qualified. The multi-religious and multiracial make-up of the whole school's cohesive community is an excellent example for Pupils. All practicing staff are excellent role models for their pupils. The school has adapted good schemes with an appropriate assessment system. The school offers a safe and secure Islamic learning environment. All pupils enjoy their learning and they are making very good progress in RE. They demonstrate outstanding behaviour. This is clearly visible in their respectful manners, which was clearly observed during lessons and around the school. The school appropriately prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. There is an elected school council. The pupils' views are taken into account by the school in any decision making process. Pupils assert their views and opinions and they express their love for the school and affiliation to their faith. There are planned visits to other places of worship and the school regularly invites external speakers

from other communities to talk to the students. The school enjoys the full support of parents and the local community. The school is also maintaining close links with local mosques and other Muslim schools.

Established strengths

- Outstanding behaviour.
- Outstanding impact of collective worship.
- Excellent leadership and management support.
- Outstanding Islamic pastoral care.
- All adults in the school community are excellent role models for pupils.
- Multicultural and multi-faith staff.
- RE curriculum linked across other areas of the school's curriculum.
- Excellent mosque facilities

Focus for development

- Establish stronger link between the RE *tajweed* section and SLT
- Maintain the teaching standards in *tajweed*
- Link Arabic conversation to the Qur'anic studies

The school, through its distinctive Islamic character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

The school has significantly improved the resources for Islamic studies since the last inspection and now there are a good quality and quantity of resources. The school's RE provision regularly updates the resources to meet the needs of its pupils. The school meets its aim by providing education for its pupils within a safe and enjoyable environment which is reflected by the school's ethos. This reflection was observed by the inspector during lesson observations, in the mosque, during the council meeting and around the school. The head, head of RE and other members of the team are practising Islamic role models for their pupils. The head of RE and other members of the management and leadership team conduct regular meetings to assess, evaluate and plan accordingly. However, a much stronger support for the head of *tajweed* section will boost the confidence of teachers in the area. All pupils' needs including those with special educational needs are taken into account. Individual education plans are in place. Extra help is provided for those who need it. Pupils' work shows that most pupils are making very good progress in RE. Parents are regularly involved in their children's learning process through regular meetings, newsletters and the school website. Various parents' events are also held throughout the year. The school through its RE programme provides learners with the opportunity to differentiate between right and wrong and to be aware of other cultures. Leaders of other faiths and cultures are invited to the school and visits to other places of worship are arranged. The whole school community enjoys a beautiful mosque facility, which is fully equipped with a *wudoo* (pre prayer ablution) facility and a prayer hall. Pupils expressed their love for the mosque. The whole

school community is reflected by the Islamic practice of care and courtesy. The school is outstanding in meeting the needs of its pupils.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The whole school is most appropriately offered, in turn, the opportunity to take part in the collective act of worship *zuhur* (midday prayer in congregation). All pupils make their *wudoo* (pre-prayer washing). After *wudoo* the pupils enter in the newly built *masjid* (mosque). Congregational prayers are organised and led by the pupils themselves with appropriate guidance and supervision from the head of RE. The process of collective worship effectively helps pupils to develop spiritually. Pupils say their supplications individually which is immensely reflected with the love for Allah (God). They come and sit in rows and listen to guidance from the head of RE. After the prayer a collective supplication of peace is offered. During the collective worship other Muslim members of staff are also present for supervision and guidance. All pupils demonstrated exemplary behaviour during the whole process of *salat* (collective worship). In addition to the conduct of collective worship, the school also involves all pupils in saying their supplications and memorising prayers from the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) during the lessons and in the school assemblies. All pupils have opportunities to recite the Holy Qur'an and sing *nasheeds* (Islamic songs) during their lessons and in school assemblies. All this effectively helps all pupils in the school to develop their spiritual life.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The head of RE with her team leads the provision with excellent guidance and support from the headteacher. The school meets its aim by providing an outstanding quality of RE education which is strongly reflected by Islamic spiritual and moral values accordingly. The School follows the National Curriculum guidelines for RE and in addition the school has developed very good quality schemes for different subjects of Islamic studies. The curriculum is broad and balanced and it meets the needs of all pupils. The Curriculum includes the holy Qur'an with the rules of *tajweed* (the correct recitation of Qur'an), a selection of *Hadith* (traditions narrated from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)), *fiqh* (theology), Islamic history, manners and *nasheeds* (Islamic songs). All pupils take part in *tahfeez* (memorisation of the holy Qur'an) to memorise some parts and some pupils have the option of full memorisation. During Qur'anic sessions rules of *tajweed* are observed and the teachers are qualified for teaching *tajweed*. There is a marking and assessment system in place which informs planning. RE results from last year prove that students are making outstanding progress. All the teachers in RE are qualified with subject specialism. Most lessons were outstanding and some were good. Teachers deliver their lessons with good planning, using appropriate language and methods. The School has a library and a good bank of resources. The RE curriculum has some Information and Communication Technology (ICT) input and it is linked across with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils celebrate different Islamic events and days.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as an Islamic school is outstanding

The school's leadership has a clear direction and plans for the future of the school. The head and the head of RE provide excellent leadership for their team by conducting regular meetings, observing lessons and always being available to offer professional help. There are regular staff development sessions and interaction with parents through parents' workshop. The leadership always keeps close links with the local Muslim community and the mainstream community. The whole school plays a key role in the Muslim community. The school makes excellent contributions in different community events. As a result the school has successfully maintained its identity as a distinctive Islamic school through a clear vision inspired by the school's leadership and staff. The leadership has a clear vision and desire for the future of the school to be an excellent Muslim school. The school's own assessment and evaluation system is effective. Daily briefings, weekly staff meetings, regular team meetings, lesson observations and staff training sessions are conducted. The school accommodation is well maintained but overcrowded. The building is nice, clean and appropriately decorated. Classrooms are well prepared with interactive white boards and link with ICT. The playground is appropriately decorated. All staff are clear about the purpose of RE and the school's Islamic ethos and have ready access to guidance, support and relevant training.