

**Section 48 Inspection Report  
Statutory Inspection of Muslim Schools Report**

**IQRA PRIMARY ISLAMIC SCHOOL SLOUGH**

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Wexham Road

Slough

Berkshire

SL2 5JW

Local authority: Slough

Dates of inspection: 29/09/2010

Date of last inspection: N/A

Headteacher: Gillian Coffey

Inspector's name: Mohammad Ismail

**School context**

Iqra Primary is a good Muslim school. The school serves the Muslim community from Slough. Iqra is a unique Muslim Voluntary Aided (VA) school, which was created from two different community schools in 2008. The school was moved to its newly built premises in November 2009. Although Iqra is a new Muslim school it has very quickly managed to establish its identity as a Muslim school. Iqra is larger than average primary with 613 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are Muslims and six children are from other faith communities. For most of its pupils English is an additional language. The school is a multi-faith and multi-cultural cohesive community.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Iqra are good as a Muslim school**

The school's senior leadership team and governing body have a clear vision and direction for Iqra to be a good Muslim school. The team aims for the school to play a central part in the life of the Muslim community by educating pupils from the local community to be good British Muslims who will play an effective role in wider society. The school is on the way by developing itself to meet its aim. The head of Islamic studies and a Muslim deputy head teacher are helping the school to drive this vision forward. They enjoy full support from the head teacher and the leadership. The school has adapted good quality schemes with an effective tracking system. The school offers a safe Islamic learning environment which reflects on pupils' behaviour. This is clearly visible in their respectful Islamic manners. All pupils acted in a responsible manner and helped their teachers and other class mates in their class rooms, during lunch and at the time of collective worship session. All pupils expressed their love and strong affiliation to their faith and love for their school. Iqra is a unique Muslim school in that it came into the faith sector from community schools. However, the school as a whole organisation has worked very hard to assert its faith identity by providing regular training for all staff to raise their awareness about the Islamic characteristics of the school and the needs of its pupils. The school enjoys staff from different backgrounds which helps pupils to understand a multicultural society. It also helps them to be tolerant and respectful towards others. Teachers in the Islamic Studies Department and other Muslim members of the school community are good role models for their pupils and some are excellent practicing examples for pupils. Key Islamic phrases and supplications are displayed not only in all classrooms but also along all corridors and other key areas around the school. All classes start their school day with a supplication and with the Islamic greetings. Lessons start and finish with a supplication. This helps pupils to learn and use Islamic terms. The overall majority of parents are very supportive of the school. However, a few would like to see the school should adopt more Islamic characteristics and some others would like to see some extracurricular activities. The school has a development a plan which already addresses most of these issues.

### Established strengths

- Good behaviour
- Good impact of collective worship
- Good leadership and management
- Good Islamic teaching and curriculum
- All adults in the school community are good role models for pupils
- Staff in the Islamic studies department are excellent practicing role models for pupils
- Multicultural and multi-faith staff
- Effective self evaluation system
- Excellent relationship with different faith communities in the town
- The school accommodates an RE resource centre for the whole town
- Islamic Art provision

### Focus for development

- Improve parents' and pupils' input in Islamic studies by offering a variety of extracurricular activities in the Islamic studies provision including Qur'an classes
- Plan for a prayer hall to serve as *masjid* for pupils
- Convert washing facilities into a proper *wudoo* (pre prayer washing) area by providing seating in the area
- Establish close link with local mosques and imams

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

The present partnership between the deputy head and the head of Islamic Studies is excellent. They have a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Staff in the Islamic Studies section present themselves as excellent role models and this reflects on pupils' social development. The curriculum meets the need of pupils but the school is still in need of strengthening the provision of *tajweed* (the rules for recitation of the Holy Qur'an). The resources for Islamic studies are good and there are reading corners in some classes. There is a clean newly built *wudoo* (pre prayer washing) area which has no seating facility. The school agrees that it will take this as an improvement plan. At present pupils use the school's dining hall for collective prayer. A proper *masjid* will help in pupils' Islamic spiritual development. The school offers a safe Islamic learning environment for its pupils to become respectful, tolerant and caring member of the community who proudly celebrate their own culture. The school effectively addresses the spiritual needs of its non-Muslim pupils. The collective act of worship (*salah*), collective assembly and Religious Education programme have resulted into social development and good behaviour. There are good links with civic organisations and with the wider community. There are plans to improve this aspect by arranging external visits and inviting outside speakers to come and talk to pupils.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

The school's collective worship session was held at *zuhur* time (after midday). Firstly, all pupils came and sat in an orderly manner in rows waiting for *jamaat* (congregational prayer) appropriately while enjoying a beautiful recitation from the Holy Qur'an. *Adhaan* (call to prayer) was said by a pupil which was followed by *iqamaah* (pre congressional call). The prayer was led by the head of Islamic Studies appropriately. Supplication was offered appropriately after the prayer. All pupils from Y4 to Y6 took part in the collective prayer session with interest. They informed the inspector of their enjoyment. The provision for prayers for year 3 is phased in during the year. The process of collective worship is regarded by the school as a central part to the life of the whole school community which contributes to pupils' spiritual and social development. The impact of the whole exercise was good. All staff are briefed about the prayer and how to help in organising the process as a result the

school's non-Muslim members of staff were also taking part in helping pupils with their organisation and preparation which was very good.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

This is due to the school's governing body and leadership's joint efforts to promote Islamic values by providing good support and guidance. The school has a good curriculum with good quality schemes and text books for each subject area. It also includes listening to memorised chapters of the Holy Qur'an. The school has plans in place to introduce the rules of *tajweed* as well. A selection from *hadith* (the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him), *fiqh* (theology), Islamic history, manners and *nasheed* (Islamic songs) are also part of the curriculum. Islamic Art is a visible strength of the school. The quality of teaching in Islamic studies is good. Planning is good with mid-term and short term plans in place. Teachers use different activities to make teaching and learning interesting and enjoyable. They are caring and courteous. In Y1 lesson teachers used some excellent ways of keeping children engaged in teaching and learning. In some lessons cut and paste culture is still in excessive use which effects pupils' enhancement. Teachers link Islamic Studies lessons with other subject areas of the curriculum. The Teaching Assistants are always around to help. The head of Islamic Studies and teachers in Islamic Studies are excellent practicing role models for their pupils. There are effective assessment, monitoring and tracking systems in place. Pupils in need of additional help are effectively identified and extra support is provided. All this allows pupils achieve good standards and make good progress. Pupils behave with Islamic manners, respect their teachers and respect each other. Pupils also learn about other cultures and religions in their Religious Education that helps them to understand the wider community. They show a clear understanding of right and wrong. The Inspector observed this in the dining hall and during the *zuhur* prayer session. The relationships between the teachers and the pupils are good, based on care, respect and trust. All pupils enjoy coming to their school and they love their school. Attendance is improving as a result of different strategies used by the school.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as an Islamic school is good**

The school's leadership has a clear vision for Islamic Studies provision and understands the strengths and weaknesses. The Muslim Deputy Head effectively directs the section and appropriately advises the governing body to improve the provision. The school is working hard with help from the head of the section to raise standards aiming towards excellence for Islamic Studies provision. There is an effective self-evaluation system in place. The subject is well organised and managed properly. There are effective plans to deal with the school's weaknesses. Appropriate resources are allocated to meet the identified targets. All staff are aware of the purpose of Religious Education. The staff have access to guidance, support and relevant training provided by the governing body of the school. The leadership is seeking to involve parents in their children's learning. Communication with the parents is good and takes place through regular meetings, letters and newsletters. The overall majority of parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the school's efforts. However, a few would like to see more Islamic studies and a few others would like to see strength in the assertion of the school's Islamic identity. The Inspector's view is that the school has made good progress as a Muslim school in a very short space of time despite the fact that the school was faced with a number of difficulties and issues.