

Rawdhatul Uloom School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Mohammad Ismail

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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, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

Rawdhatul Uloom is an independent Muslim day school. It is situated near Blackburn city centre. The school was established in 1992 and was registered in 2000. It was last inspected in 2007. The school makes provision for girls and boys aged between four and 11 years of age and at present there are 134 pupils on roll. There are 23 pupils in the Reception class. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs or learning English as an additional language. The school aims 'to create a friendly, caring, Islamic environment in which boys and girls can feel happy and confident and where staff and pupils enjoy working with each other.'

Evaluation of the school

The overall quality of education is satisfactory. Rawdhatul Uloom school meets its aims by providing a safe and happy environment where pupils' behaviour is outstanding and the provision for their social, moral and cultural development is good. All safeguarding requirements are met and the welfare, health and safety of its pupils are good. The overall quality of Early Years Foundation Stage provision is inadequate. The school has made no significant improvements since its last inspection. Where improvements have been introduced they have not gone far enough to make a sufficient impact on outcomes. The school meets almost all of the regulations for registration as an independent school.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There is a curriculum policy which is supported by satisfactory schemes of work for each subject area, including those for science, citizenship, geography and art, which meet the educational and religious needs of the pupils. The school follows the National Curriculum for its secular education and offers effective provision for literacy and numeracy. The religious education is provided through a good quality of Islamic studies programme with a daily practice of *zikr* (remembrance) and prayers to promote Islamic spiritual values. In addition,

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

aqeedah (beliefs), the Qur'anic studies, *hadith* and *seerah* (the tradition and the life of the prophet) are included to help pupils with practical aspects of Islamic practice.

However, the curriculum in the Reception class does not meet sufficiently the needs of the children because they do not receive their full entitlement to all six areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) for all pupils has improved since the last inspection. Whilst there is a separate ICT suite, the lack of computers or interactive whiteboards in classrooms restricts the general use of ICT in support of teaching and learning.

The school offers good quality personal social and health education (PSHE) provision in accordance with Islamic teachings which covers a range of topics that effectively develop pupils' personal and social values. The mid-day prayers, supplications in lessons and the Islamic studies programme provide extra enrichment for the PSHE provision. A suitable time is allocated to all subjects with more time given to the literacy and numeracy provision. The provision for physical education (PE) is limited to only one session per week. Opportunities for external educational visits and trips are limited and pupils would like there to be more educational trips and outings.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teaching in the Reception class is also satisfactory. The school has maintained the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. All teaching seen in this inspection was at least satisfactory and a few lessons were good. Generally teachers plan their lessons to meet the needs of all pupils although this aspect is not quite as strong in the Reception class. Teachers establish links between different subject areas of the curriculum to enhance pupils' learning. Class time is managed wisely. Occasionally, teachers use different teaching methods to make the teaching and learning more enjoyable for pupils. Most teaching relies heavily on teacher-led activities and there is excessive use of textbooks and worksheets. During some lessons pupils took an active part in their lesson activities, for example, by being involved in group activities with opportunities to work independently. However, regular opportunities for independent learning, research and exploring the outside world are limited.

Teachers are caring and polite. They encourage their pupils by making good use of praise. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and are based on Islamic values. All pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour in their lessons. They are very respectful to their teachers and their attitude to learning is good. Pupils show pride in their work. There is a satisfactory marking and assessment policy in place. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and teachers use assessment information to inform their planning although for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers' planning does not always challenge the more-able children as fully as it might

The school's Islamic ethos and satisfactory teaching helps all pupils to make satisfactory progress; some make good progress in their learning. Progress in the Reception class is also satisfactory. The school conducts its own regular tests and reports on progress to parents. However, the school's means of evaluating its own

performance have not been made clear to parents or to pupils. As a result, neither group fully understand the test results and the extent of the progress being made by pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They attend school regularly and there are very few unauthorised absences. Pupils' attitude to learning is very good. They say that they love their school and enjoy their education. Children in the Reception Year are well behaved and their personal development is good. When pupils greet each other and visitors, they are respectful and polite. Pupils say they feel safe. The school promotes pupils' outstanding behaviour through its assemblies, Islamic studies and the PSHE programme. They learn to distinguish between right and wrong. There is currently no school council and pupils say that they would like to play a more active role in the life of the school. They help in school by acting as prefects and monitors, for example, in the school playground.

The school, through its basic skills provision and Islamic studies programme, successfully prepares pupils for their next phase of their education. The school's records show that almost all pupils progress into *darul-ulooms* (Islamic seminaries) to become *imams* (Muslim faith leaders) and mosque teachers. Pupils take part in different competitions to compete with each other in demonstrating their different talents, for example, in handwriting, writing poetry, singing *nasheeds* (Islamic songs) and in art. Their work is displayed on the school's website. They make a good contribution to the wider community by raising funds for a local charity. The school promotes good community cohesion by teaching its pupils about other faiths and by establishing good working relationships with a local maintained school. Occasionally, a local Christian minister visits the school to talk to the pupils. However, the school does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to visit places of interest from cultures other than their own. Pupils gain a satisfactory awareness of British institutions through history and citizenship lessons.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

There are good levels of care for pupils' welfare, health and safety in the school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, this level of care, although good, is not informed by staff's suitable qualifications in the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is a suitable anti-bullying policy which is effectively implemented. The school successfully raises pupils' awareness about healthy food and healthy lifestyles with a policy which requires that no unhealthy food is eaten at lunchtime. All the required safeguarding and safer recruitment policies are in place and all staff, including the designated child protection officer, are trained at the required level. Risk assessments meet the regulations. The school has a first aid policy and there are first aiders on the staff who are trained to the required level. The school has a fire risk assessment and all fire fighting equipment is regularly tested and staff are

trained in fire safety. The school's attendance and admission registers meet the regulations. The school has created a three-year accessibility plan which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All required checks have been undertaken to ensure that all staff and the proprietors are suitable to work with children. The school maintains a single central register which meets the regulations.

Premises of and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation enable pupils to learn safely and securely. There are sufficient classrooms and washroom facilities for the number of pupils on roll. A separate ICT suite and outdoor area for Early Years Foundation Stage is allocated adjacent to the main building. There is an outdoor play area. In addition, the school occasionally uses the outside area of a local maintained primary school.

Provision of information

The school meets all requirements by providing the necessary information to parents, carers and others through an up-to-date prospectus and a website. The school has an effectively implemented policy of reporting annually on pupils' progress to parents, carers and others. All parents were very supportive of the school in their responses to the inspection questionnaires. However, some parents would like the dates of the school terms to match those of other schools in the area. Some would also like the school to organise more trips and visits.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school has a complaints policy and a set of procedures, which meet all of the regulations. The school has taken steps to ensure that parents and carers are aware of these procedures.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. This is because leadership and management of the provision are inadequate. The school has not ensured that the staff are suitably qualified or trained fully in the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. There are no suitable self-evaluation procedures with clear priorities to bring about improvement to children's outcomes. Although the school works in partnership with parents to promote the good care and well-being of their children, the school does not inform

parents sufficiently well about their child's progress to enable them to reinforce or enhance learning at home. Nevertheless, parents speak highly of the school.

Satisfactory teaching ensures children are happy and settle to lessons without fuss. They listen and behave well and these skills soundly prepare them for the expectations of Year 1 and beyond. They develop an adequate understanding of keeping healthy, for example, they eat healthy snacks at break time. They make an adequate contribution to the way the day runs through their adherence to routines and in meeting the expectations of good behaviour. Children make steady progress in early literacy and numeracy skills given their starting points. As a result, overall outcomes are satisfactory.

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is inadequate. The learning environment is limited in size and there is no free flow access to the outdoors. Resources are limited and planning does not always ensure that children receive full their entitlement to all six areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Opportunities to promote the children's creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world are the least effective areas. While teaching is satisfactory overall, teachers' planning does not always challenge the more-able children as fully as it might. Also, teaching can on occasions be overly led by the teacher rather than including activities that are more freely chosen by the children.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.³

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure that there is a framework in place by which pupil performance can be evaluated by reference to either the school's own aims, as provided to parents or by national norms (paragraph (4)).

In order to comply with the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school must:

- ensure that planning covers more consistently all the required six areas of learning

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made

- ensure that the quality of the planning and provision for individual children meet their identified needs and capabilities
- ensure that adults are suitably qualified
- ensure that the school more fully engages with parents/carers
- develop self-evaluation procedures which include clear priorities to improve the outcomes for learners.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- improve the quality of teaching so that pupils are more fully involved in their learning
- provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge of different faiths and cultures by organising visits to different places of interest
- improve the quality of resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- extend the use of the outside area in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision so that children have more opportunities to move between the indoor and outdoor areas.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education			√	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			√	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			√	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			√	

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils	√			

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage			√	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage				√
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage				√
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage				√

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Muslim day		
Date school opened	1992		
Age range of pupils	4-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 66	Girls: 68	Total: 134
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£900		
Address of school	184 Whalley Old Road Blackburn Lancashire BB1 5NZ		
Telephone number	01254 670017		
Email address	info@gardenofknowledge.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr A Wasway		
Proprietor	Siddiqiyya Educational Trust		