

London East Academy

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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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

London East Academy is a Muslim secondary school for boys housed inside the London Muslim Centre, a complex situated in the heart of Whitechapel, and managed by the East London Mosque Trust Limited. It provides an education for boys between the ages of 11 and 18. Also in the same building is a primary school for boys aged seven to 11 years under the leadership of the same headteacher and managed by the same trust. The primary school was not part of the current inspection. There are 161 students on roll including 17 in the sixth form. Most students are of Bangladeshi heritage while some are of Somali, Pakistani, Indian and North African heritage. There are no students with a statement of special educational needs and none at an early stage of English language acquisition. London East Academy was opened in September 2004 and was first inspected in May 2005. Its aim is 'To contribute towards preparing a new generation of Quran memorisers, scholars and leaders for Europe'

Evaluation of the school

London East Academy provides a good quality of education and successfully meets its aims. As a result of good teaching, students make good progress. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as is their behaviour. They leave the school as confident and articulate young people. The school has robust procedures for safeguarding. The school has improved since the last inspection and now meets all but one of the regulations for registration.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. A particular strength is the Islamic sciences element which contributes half of the taught curriculum, the remaining half being allocated to the National Curriculum subjects. The range of subjects taught reflects the needs of the students well, although there are limitations in the opportunities for sporting activities. Although art and design and technology do not feature in the regular timetabled curriculum, they are delivered as a two-week block at the end of the year through the *Usrah* (house teams) cross-curricular projects across all year groups. The Islamic sciences comprise *Seerah* (life of the prophet), *Qur'an*, *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), *Aqeedah* (Islamic beliefs and morals), *Tafsir* (interpretation

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

of Qur'anic text), *Hadith* (sayings of the prophet), *Taarikh* (Islamic history), and Arabic. The National Curriculum element comprises English, mathematics, science, humanities, citizenship, religious studies and physical education. The curriculum allocation for the National Curriculum subjects increases while that for Islamic sciences decreases as students progress into Years 10 and 11. In the very small sixth form, the school offers five subjects at A level (AS and A2): mathematics, Arabic, economics and business studies, religious studies and information and communication technology (ICT). A productive partnership with a local Muslim secondary school and Tower Hamlets College broadens significantly the range of the sixth form curriculum to a total of 20 subjects offered at AS and A2 level. The school's curriculum policy outlines a clear rationale for the range of National Curriculum and Islamic science subjects and other activities that are taught across the school, most with detailed schemes of work in place. While all the schemes are at least adequate, they are variable in quality and impact. Students can take a small number of GCSE examinations in Years 9 and 10, thereby freeing up time for many students to take GCSEs in the three separate sciences in Year 11 and, from next year, a full GCSE in citizenship.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teachers know their students well and many use this knowledge to plan effective lessons that precisely match students' abilities, interests and prior attainment. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, the teacher used assessment information well when planning, resulting in students making good progress when they used clear personalised success criteria to write a PEE (Point, Evidence and Explanation) paragraph based on their analysis of Shakespeare's plays. However, this good practice is not consistent as there is a small proportion of satisfactory teaching where teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of prior assessment information. Teachers have good and sometimes outstanding subject knowledge, and most subjects are taught by specialists. Year 7 students really enjoyed their Qur'an lesson taught in an engaging way by a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher. Most of the time, teachers set high expectations for students' progress and behaviour, use a variety of approaches and strategies, and make effective use of questioning to consolidate students' learning. This is also the case in the sixth form where the level and depth of challenge is evident through the independent learning tasks that students engage in routinely .

Assessment systems have been improved since the previous inspection and are now good. However, students' books are not marked routinely in all subjects and comments to show students how to improve are inconsistent. Students have challenging level or grade targets against which their progress is regularly checked through teacher assessments. Data from the school's tracking system, evidence from students' books and results from GCSE courses show that almost all students in Years 7 – 11 are making good progress and, for a few in some subjects, outstanding progress. Those in the sixth form make good progress overall.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All the elements of the Islamic sciences curriculum make a strong contribution to the development students' self-awareness and confidence. The school ethos promotes in the students a strong sense of mutual self-respect and trust. There is a very friendly, welcoming atmosphere and students enjoy very good relationships with their teachers. Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions to satisfy their curiosity about their own faith. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), students asked many questions about why certain categories of women were prohibited for Muslim men to marry. The teacher's animated response further stimulated their curiosity. The well-structured programme of daily prayer, morning tutorials and regular assemblies contributes substantially to the outstanding spiritual and moral development of students. Staff are excellent role models and give students a sense of responsibility by treating them as young adults. In response, students are respectful, their behaviour is outstanding and they are maturing into sensible young adults ready for the next stage of their education. Attendance and punctuality are very good, students have a very positive attitude to learning and their economic well-being is promoted effectively.

Students' social development is outstanding. Relationships between students are very harmonious and there is healthy competition between the five all-age *Usrah* (house) divisions that have been created by the school. For example, the *Usrah* groups compete with each other to achieve maximum points for attendance, punctuality, behaviour and good moral conduct. Students come from different ethnic backgrounds and racial harmony is promoted very effectively. In addition, the 'Alif Aleph' project with an independent Jewish school in Golders Green has made a strong contribution to students' good cultural development. The high public profile of the London Muslim Centre means that students get frequent opportunities to meet and engage with key officials of the British establishment, for example the Prince of Wales and a good number of local and national politicians. This, coupled with provision of a good citizenship curriculum, adds significantly to students' knowledge and understanding of English services and institutions.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements to provide for the welfare, health and safety of the students are good. The school has devised and implemented effectively a range of well-written policies which include anti-bullying, health and safety on visits outside the school, and management of behaviour. These help to minimise the health and safety risks to the students and detailed risk assessments are carried out on all activities. The policy on safeguarding meets the regulations and all staff are trained in safeguarding as part of their induction, with the headteacher, who is the designated officer, trained to a higher level. The school benefits from being housed within the London Muslim Centre where health and safety is given a high priority. For example, precautions to prevent fire are good, with a detailed fire risk assessment, regular documented fire drills and all fire appliances maintained under an annual contract. There are several trained

first aiders on the site and an appropriate first aid policy. Students eat healthily during lunchtime and visit the local sports centre for physical education, although they say that insufficient time is allocated for this. Admission and attendance registers are kept according to the regulations. The school has devised and implemented a three-year accessibility plan to fulfil its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has undertaken appropriate identity and criminal records checks on staff and the information is recorded as required on the single central staff register. Recruitment procedures, especially at the interview stage, are robust.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The teaching areas of the main school are situated on the second floor of the London Muslim Centre while the sixth form are taught on the third floor. The premises provide both good quality accommodation and a safe learning environment. All rooms are well equipped with appropriate furniture and an interactive whiteboard. There are well resourced specialist rooms for ICT and science. Throughout the school, the decor is in good condition and well-kept displays of students' work reflect the mutual respect between staff and students. Good use is made of three spacious halls during morning break and lunchtime for some light physical activity and consumption of food. However, the school has no outside space for pupils to play safely. There are no facilities on site for physical education but suitable arrangements have been made at the local Whitechapel Sports Centre.

Provision of information

The school provides all the required information to parents and carers. Some general information about the education provision is provided on the London East Academy website. The school's 'Parents Matters' pamphlet is a useful document and provides the required information or makes appropriate reference to it. Detailed reports on students' progress are produced twice a year and very useful consultation sessions held with parents three times a year. In these sessions, parents are acquainted with their sons' progress using the school's highly visual 'traffic light' tracking system which tracks students' progress against their end-of-year targets. Most of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire are supportive of the school and value the quality of education provided. One satisfied parent commented, 'I am really happy with the progress my son is making. I have seen a huge improvement in his behaviour and attitude.'

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The procedures for handling complaints meet all requirements. There have been two complaints during this academic year, which were handled appropriately, and the school has recorded the details as required.

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 premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there are appropriate arrangements for providing outside space for pupils to play safely (paragraph 23(s)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- ensure that all teachers make the best use of assessment information to plan for the full range of abilities in their classes
- ensure that all teachers consistently give good-quality written feedback to students on their work to support them in making further improvements.

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

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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School details

School status	Independent
Type of school	Muslim day secondary school
Date school opened	September 2004
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Male
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	161
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,900
Address of school	46 Whitechapel Road London W1 1JX
Telephone number	020 7650 3070
Email address	admin@leacademy.com
Headteacher	Mr Musleh Faradhi
Proprietor	East London Mosque Trust Limited