



Al-Noor Primary School

Inspection report

This inspection was carried out under section 162 (A) of the Education Act 2002 as amended. 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:	317/6076
Association:	AMSUK
Date of inspection:	12 th -15 th July 2010
Lead Inspector:	Mr M Thirkell
Team inspectors:	Mr Y Seedat Mrs R Slack
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Number on roll:	179
Full-time:	74 boys 105 girls
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	None
Proprietor:	Mr D Juneja
Head teacher:	Mrs S Butt
Address of school:	619-625 Green Lane Goodmayes Essex IG3 9RP
Telephone number:	0208 5977576
Email:	someerab@al-noor.co.uk

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

Al-Noor is registered as an independent faith school. It is situated on an inner city site in Goodmayes, near to Ilford in Essex. The school, which was first registered as a primary school in 2002, now provides places for 179 boys and girls between four and eleven years of age. There are 26 pupils between the ages of four and five in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There are no pupils who have a statement of special educational need, although 21 are identified as having various degrees of learning difficulties. Two of these pupils receive additional support for their learning difficulties from outside agencies. No pupils are identified by the school as requiring additional support for English as an additional language. The school's mission statement is described as, *'to strive to promote moral, academic, emotional, spiritual and professional excellence in a caring and secure Islamic environment'*. Their vision is to provide *'an inspiring, transforming learning centre at the heart of the local community'* and to nurture *'generations of self-aware, leading and highly achieving Muslims who serve Allah and positively transform and serve their selves, families, communities and societies'*. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2007.

Evaluation of the school

Al-Noor School is a successful school which fulfils its mission statement and stated vision. The good quality of education and their overall positive learning experience supports pupils of all ages and abilities effectively, including the youngest in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils make good academic progress relative to their ages and abilities and are provided with rich opportunities to develop their knowledge of and depth of understanding of their Islamic faith. The curriculum is of good quality and has a number of outstanding features. Islamic elements are integrated throughout the curriculum. It provides an appropriate balance between those subjects based on the National Curriculum and those in the Islamic curriculum. An effective transition programme is currently taken by Year 6 pupils, who have completed end of Key Stage 2 tests. It is notably well designed to provide guidance and support prior to the next stage of their education, and to prepare them for their future lives and their economic and social wellbeing. A wide range of extra-curricular activities enjoyed and appreciated by all pupils significantly enrich and contribute to the quality of education and personal development. Teaching is good and procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress are outstanding. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the well-planned lessons; they provide effective support to the hard working and conscientious teachers. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It successfully reflects the school's goals of nurturing pupils in the core values of their faith. Their

behaviour around the school and in corridors is exemplary. Throughout the school, the pupils are well looked after. Policies and strategies to ensure their welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The pupils say that they appreciate the care provided by their teachers and that they feel safe in the school. Procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are clearly understood and implemented thoroughly. The school makes good use of its accommodation, but it is now at full capacity and is actively seeking to extend its premises. It has made good progress since the last inspection conducted by Ofsted. The high quality of education and care achieved reflects the insightful and dedicated leadership of the headteacher, supported by her committed management team. The school meets all the regulations for independent schools in England.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good and has outstanding features. It provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils of all abilities to learn and make good progress. The good progress made by pupils is reflected in their achievements in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2; results are consistently above the national average for pupils of their age. The Islamic ethos of the school pervades all aspects of the curriculum. There is an effective balance between a full range of National Curriculum based subjects and those of the Islamic curriculum, which include Arabic, Qur'an and Islamic studies. Curriculum planning is meticulous. It exemplifies the commitment and thoroughness of both the management and teachers in ensuring that the pupils receive a broad and balanced learning experience which supports their academic, physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development.

Careful planning ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those identified as having varying degrees of special learning needs, and the most able. Long and medium term plans are well supported by detailed schemes of work for each subject. Curriculum planning is informed by an appropriately wide range of nationally published and faith documents. The level of detail in planning reflects the school's aim of ensuring a high level of consistency and continuity in their provision, even in circumstances when staff turnover is high. Themes are used effectively to link subjects in the curriculum, for example the study of Islam in Spain links pupils' work and study in history, geography, art, and design and technology.

Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is provided for all pupils from Year 1. The carefully planned and delivered course is linked closely to social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL). These elements of the curriculum are well planned as a unit of learning and are also integrated across the curriculum, including Islamic Studies. Teachers make good use of opportunities that arise throughout the curriculum for relating learning to pupils' moral and social development and to Muslim teachings on these faith-related matters. Pupils' physical development is suitably supported by timetabled physical education (PE) and additional after-school games which are taken by all pupils. Tag rugby, introduced recently is popular with both boys and girls. The wide range of extra-curricular activities makes a significant and important contribution to pupils' broader education and personal development. Pupils speak enthusiastically about a recent residential adventure trip. Other visits, which are mapped throughout the year, linked to aspects of the curriculum, include to the Science Museum, the Natural

History Museum and to the site of Spitalfields market, related to a study of the history of London.

A 'transition' curriculum is currently provided for Year 6 pupils who have completed their national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils say that they recognise the value of the course in relation to the next stage of their education. For example, pupils undertook work in small groups to reflect on the financial, personal and social impact on a family of moving from one part of England to another. The project was effective in encouraging pupils to think maturely and independently about the issues involved. It emphasised their good skills in working and speaking together and, in particular, listening to what one another had to say. The course is effectively supported by outside speakers such as a local police officer. Together with other aspects of their curriculum, including the development of personal strength through learning about their faith, their experience in this course provides a good basis for ensuring that pupils are well prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of their future education and lives.

The Islamic curriculum seeks to develop pupils' Islamic knowledge as well as their knowledge of the Qur'an and Arabic and is of good quality. It is delivered through Qur'anic studies, Arabic and Islamic studies throughout the school, including the Reception class. Aspects of the Islamic studies curriculum are also taught through PSHE, SEAL, assemblies, history and other subjects. Good cross-curricular links between the three main subjects of the Islamic curriculum enhance all of them very well. The Arabic curriculum enables pupils to learn to understand and speak Arabic in phrases in the lower years and by Year 6 progressing to writing in Arabic competently and with clarity. Provision for Qur'anic studies is good. The pupils, in the lower years begin to learn the alphabet progressing to learning the rules of *tajweed* (correct pronunciation) of the alphabet; by Year 6 they are fluent readers of the Qur'an. Pupils learn the meaning of some of the *surahs* (chapters) of the Qur'an and most memorise, relative to their ages, a significant portion of the Qur'an. Those who are capable are given the opportunity to begin the process of memorising the whole Qur'an and extra time is allocated subsequently.

The curriculum for Islamic studies is of good quality and concentrates on the spiritual development of pupils, focusing in particular on the Islamic qualities of *iman* (Faith), *Islam* (belief), *ihsan* (perfection and excellence), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *muhasabah* (self-assessment), *tawakul'alalAllah* (reliance on Allah), *sabr* (patience), *shukr* (gratitude) and self-sufficiency. This aspect of the Islamic curriculum is also delivered through Qur'an lessons, assemblies, daily acts of worship, prayers (*du'as*), and a daily congregational prayer (*dhuhr salah*), as well as the Islamisation of lessons in other subjects, including PSHE, SEAL and citizenship. Regular educational school visits provide further well planned opportunities to enhance the Islamic curriculum.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good with outstanding features. Teachers work hard to support the educational and personal progress made by pupils of all abilities. They demonstrate a strong commitment to the school and to supporting its educational and faith aims. The happy and positive learning environment which typifies lessons reflects the positive relationships that teachers have with the pupils and encourages them to show enthusiasm and interest as learners. Teachers are appropriately qualified and demonstrate good knowledge, supported by their

thorough preparation of the subjects they teach. Their classroom management skills are generally good. This enables lessons to proceed usually at a good pace and engage the interest and involvement of the pupils.

Lessons are invariably well planned. This reflects the clear guidance and support provided by the leadership and management of the school underpinned by whole school planning. Lessons are for the most part carefully structured to ensure that the pupils make progress. Teachers' lesson plans clearly identify opportunities to link learning with aspects of faith. Classrooms are well organised to make good use of space to support a range of learning strategies and resources are well prepared. Lesson plans are effectively supported by the detailed schemes of work which identify the resources likely to be required to deliver each aspect of the curriculum. Well-planned opportunities are provided for the pupils to work in groups, where they learn to express their views and listen to views of their peers. Both lessons and assemblies enable individual pupils to make presentations to the whole class and the whole school, which support the development of independence and confidence.

The high quality of lesson planning and organisation ensures that all pupils are provided with good opportunities to acquire new knowledge, learn new skills and to make progress in all subjects in the curriculum. Resources are sufficient to support the curriculum and to enhance learning opportunities. New resources, for example to support the development of PE and games in the curriculum, are purchased as required. There is no school library for older pupils to undertake independent research, although displays throughout the school show that pupils' develop good skills through project research and writing. A suitable range of books is available throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities show that they love books and reading and younger children are eager to demonstrate their developing skills and pleasure in reading. A room set aside for information and communication technology (ICT) is regularly used to support learning and enhance the range of pupils' developing communication skills.

Pupils identified as having learning difficulties receive good support. The specialist teacher carefully plans to ensure that each pupil's needs are identified and met and meets regularly with class teachers to provide guidance and support. Detailed individual education plans are completed for each pupil identified as having special learning needs. These documents, which relate to personal and behavioural as well as educational matters, are valuable in providing guidance to teachers in planning lessons. Where additional support is required to support pupils' individual learning needs these are arranged outside school in consultation with specialist staff. Planning takes account of the needs of the most able who have been identified by the school as gifted and talented. Although planning for this group of pupils is already good in a number of respects the school is clear that it is still developing some aspects of this provision. The specific needs of pupils identified as having learning difficulties, and of the most able, are effectively identified through teachers' plans, reflected in the organisation and structuring of lessons and well supported by the teaching assistants' informed involvement in activities.

The quality of assessment is outstanding. It is supported effectively by a clear policy and guidelines, including for marking. Class teachers know their pupils very well. This ensures that pupils' personal as well as their learning needs are well met.

Teachers' knowledge of their pupils is supported by very good strategies for ensuring that they receive the necessary information about all individual specific learning needs. They regularly record their pupils' progress in the range of subjects and activities in considerable detail. Pupils say that they trust their teachers and that they speak with them regularly about their work, and are confident in their support and guidance about personal as well as academic concerns. Exercise books are marked regularly and helpful written feedback is provided which takes account carefully of the age and ability of each pupil.

The high quality of provision for assessment is supported by a clear understanding of how to make best use of the large amount of data and information available in the school. Assessment strategies relate well to the school's own aims and to national tests completed at the end of Key Stage 2 which enable positive comparisons with national norms to be made. The school progressively builds its knowledge of pupils' progress through thorough and regular monitoring. The good records of pupils' attainments kept by teachers support this process well. Procedures for reviewing available information and data derived from tests and the regular monitoring of the progress of each pupil are used effectively to ensure that all pupils receive support matched to their needs and are thus enabled to make good progress. Pupils are aware of their own progress and are regularly involved in assessing their own work and that of their peers.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. The development of these qualities is central to the faith based aims and vision of the school and guides the planning of pupils' overall experience in school and their learning. The Islamic, PSHE and SEAL elements of the curriculum make a central contribution to the outstanding quality of pupils' spiritual development. Pupils say their prayers reverentially and calmly. Regular opportunities for whole school prayers provide excellent opportunities for staff to provide good role models. The particular emphasis given by the school to *hifz* (memorising of the Qur'an), provides an important opportunity for motivating and supporting pupils' spiritual development. Further opportunities are provided through the Islamic perspective embedded throughout the curriculum. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop self-knowledge, confidence and self-esteem through a range of well organised aspects of their learning, such as their involvement in reviewing their own progress and being encouraged to express their views and speak to groups of their peers.

The curriculum as a whole, in particular aspects of the school's Islamic curriculum, supports and encourages pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Positive actions and moral views are promoted through learning the values of *taqwa* (piety) and *akhlaq* (good manners). Pupils develop knowledge of the law in England through PSHE and visits to the school by a local police officer. Their behaviour around the school and in corridors is exemplary. Pupils are polite and communicate confidently with adults and each other. The school's positive management of behaviour sets high expectations, including of self-discipline, as informed by the *sunnah*, and the pupils respond well.

The social development of the pupils is outstanding. It is effectively developed through group activities and the school's expectation of being considerate to the feelings and views of others. Pupils have extensive opportunities to contribute to the life of their own and the local community. The active student council meets regularly and helps pupils develop leadership skills. For example, by organising a weekly 'VIP lunch' as a reward for those pupils who have worked hard. Corridor monitors help to ensure a calm and orderly movement of pupils about the school at lunchtimes. Year 6 pupils visit a local care home for the elderly regularly. Pupils help organise fund raising activities to support the school and local and global charities; for example, by contributing to and preparing shoe-gift boxes for children in war-torn areas of the world. They raise funds through 'cake & bake' sales at local mosques, bike-athons in the local park and sponsored swims. Activities such as these encourage pupils to show initiative and increase their understanding of how they can contribute to community life and develop their sense of social responsibility.

Pupils learn the qualities of good citizenship in Islamic studies and develop their knowledge of public institutions in England when they study the history of London. Visits by the local police officer, the fire brigade, local politicians and ambulance services enhance these opportunities. Their knowledge of public institutions is extended through citizenship studies within the PSHE curriculum. The wide range of extra-curricular activities enrich and considerably extend opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences further, for example a performance by the school choir at an interfaith gathering at Newham General Hospital and when entertaining civil servants at an Eid celebration in Whitehall.

The cultural development of pupils is outstanding. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to respect and show consideration to people from different cultural and faith traditions. Activities to promote attitudes of tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions are effectively organised. The school has developed a partnership with a local Roman Catholic school. The teachers from both schools have planned lessons together and their pupils have recently worked together finding out how much they had in common. In Islamic studies and PSHE the pupils are taught to value the views and beliefs of others. The wide range of the extra-curricular activities helps pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. Pupils and staff themselves come from diverse cultural backgrounds and the school celebrates the range of their heritages. During a recent whole school heritage day pupils came in cultural dress and brought artefacts typical of those cultures to show their peers. Food from the various cultural traditions was shared between families. The school supports the development of pupils' knowledge of other faiths, for example through visits to a local synagogue and a Sikh temple.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. Pupils in school are very well cared for in a safe and secure environment. Pastoral care is excellent, supported by strong and positive relationships between staff and pupils and good links with parents. This effectively supports the Islamic ethos of the school and results in a calm and positive atmosphere. Throughout the inspection pupils' behaviour was exemplary, including moving around the limited space in the building with care and

consideration. The school has an anti-bullying policy and pupils say that they trust their teachers to deal quickly with any cases of bullying, should they occur.

Staff are well supported with regular training in all aspects of health and safety, including fire, first aid and child protection. A particular feature is the rigorous induction programme undertaken by all staff, including midday supervisors, when they join the school. As a result, all staff share a common understanding of the aims and values of the school, resulting in a consistent approach to expectations of behaviour and *akhlaq* (good manners). All necessary policies are meticulously documented and are implemented consistently. Risk assessments and electrical checks are regularly carried out and records are carefully kept. Suitable risk assessments are completed for the school buildings and for visits made by pupils out of school. There is appropriate provision for pupils who are ill. There are presently no disabled pupils, but building improvement plans include ramped entrances and a lift to the upper floors. The school fulfils its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.

The school has been awarded Eco-School status (Bronze level) for its efforts in encouraging healthy and environmentally friendly methods of travelling to school and promoting a regular 'Walk to School' day. School-wide tag rugby, recently added to the available after-school activities, increases pupils' enjoyment and provides opportunities for them to develop positive attitudes to sportsmanship and team spirit, as well as further opportunities to keep fit. Parents are encouraged to provide their children with healthy lunch packs through regular reminders in the termly newsletter and fruit and water is available to pupils in school. Pupils develop important life skills as they grow and sample their own fresh produce grown on the school allotment.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school undertakes all the required checks with the Criminal Record Bureau for staff and adults who regularly attend the school. A record of the checks completed is appropriately maintained in a register of checks undertaken.

School's premises and accommodation

The school makes good use of its available accommodation which is suitable for the current number of pupils. The buildings are well maintained and kept clean. Maintenance and cleaning of the buildings benefit from the presence of a full-time, diligent caretaker. Suitable arrangements are in place for any emergency evacuation of the building that might be necessary. Classrooms are of adequate size; however, some are now at their maximum capacity and the school is actively planning to extend their accommodation. Desks and chairs are suitable for the ages of the pupils using them. Supervision is good and pupils have sufficient outdoor areas for play. Outdoor play space is enhanced by a partial roof which enables pupils to play outside on days when it rains. Suitable outdoor resources as well as separate areas for play are available for the different age groups of pupils. Opportunities for physical development are enhanced by the use of the adjacent public park for team games. Extensive display in corridors and classrooms supports pupils' learning and celebrates their achievements as well as reflecting the Islamic ethos of the school. Separate accommodation is available for ICT and a good sized school hall doubles as a suitably equipped gymnasium. A prayer hall enhances

opportunities for spiritual development; paintings on the wall depict the basic tenets and beliefs of Islam. The school has made suitable improvements since the last inspection and now has appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school communicates effectively and regularly with parents. It provides a good range of information for parents, including providing all required details of the curriculum provision, pupils' welfare and safety, discipline and the promotion of good behaviour. The description of the curriculum outlines how it is interwoven with Islamic teachings. Staff ensure that there is a regular flow of information to keep parents up to date with their child's progress, including twice yearly written reports. School reports are of a good quality and assess not only the pupils' academic achievements, but also their character development and spiritual maturity. The school's website is regularly updated and contributes a useful and informative additional dimension to its communication with parents and the wider community. The school sees parental partnership as vital to the educational process. In pre-inspection questionnaires, parents expressed their overwhelming satisfaction with the school, demonstrating support for its ethos and management. Overall, comments demonstrate their appreciation of the school and how it has contributed to the lives and supported the development of their children. Helpful and informative workshops are regularly organised to inform and support parents in their role as partners with the school. A parents' association have been instrumental in organising fund-raising events such as the annual Fun Day which pupils look forward to. Parent focus groups meet with the head from time to time to support school self-evaluation and action planning, and parents are often involved in practical support such as escorting pupils to the school allotment or assisting with midday supervision.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has a suitable complaints policy which is made available to parents. It is helpfully written in clear, succinct and accessible text. The school has received no formal complaints.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The provision for the 26 EYFS pupils in the Reception class is good with many outstanding features. In particular, the pastoral care and provision for their personal development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they show a high level of interest and enthusiasm for learning which they are happy to share with others. The classroom is attractive and stimulating; it is well resourced with helpful displays, which encourage enquiry and investigation. The limitation of space is acknowledged but compensated for by the strong organisational skills of the staff team and by the ingenious use of the covered outdoor play area for groups of nine pupils at a time throughout the day. Although the limitations of space do not currently impact on the overall quality of the pupils' educational experience, the school acknowledges the need to redevelop both Reception and Year 1 classrooms which are currently at full capacity.

The Islamic ethos is skilfully woven throughout the daily activities and there are specific Arabic and Qur'anic lessons, which are taught in an inspirational way, motivating and engaging all the pupils to reach a remarkably high standard of speaking, reading and writing of Arabic and recitation of the Qur'an relative to their ages. Overall teaching is good, enabling pupils to make good progress. For example, a topic on sharks inspired interest and enthusiasm in the class; pupils invented shark games in the outside space, made shark masks and playdough sharks' teeth inside. In addition, scientific investigations about floating and sinking as well as relevant reading, writing and ICT activities motivated the class to investigate the topic further. Extensive use is made of the outdoor dedicated play space and of the general playground with its covered area, which can be used in all weathers; imaginative playground markings encourage creative play; skipping-ropes, hoops, and a trampoline are available for more structured physical development. A wide range of school trips and regular visits to the school allotment and the local park further develop their life skills and strengthen pupils' links with the local community.

The well qualified staff ensure that activities are well-matched to pupils' needs. There is a healthy balance of more structured teacher-led and 'free flow' child-initiated activities during each day. The pupils' progress is carefully assessed by observations of their day-to-day activities which are noted in their early years profile. Examples of work and photographic evidence are also gathered for the 'Learning Journey' folder, which provides a personal souvenir for parents of their children's time in the Reception class as well as their progress. Staff pay very careful attention to the welfare, health and safety of all their pupils. Healthy snacks and water are provided and pupils are encouraged to aim for high standards of diet, fitness and hygiene.

The nursery leader, together with her committed team of staff, has managed the implementation of the EYFS very effectively. Parents express their overwhelming appreciation. One wrote: *'I am very impressed with the holistic approach of the Early Years curriculum'* and another described how the school had helped her child grow in confidence and a sense of responsibility towards her local community. All children make very good progress towards the early learning goals and are well prepared for their transition to the more formal work of Year 1 with a strong foundation in phonics, reading, writing and number.

Compliance with the regulations

The school meets all of the regulations for registration and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Meeting the expectations of AMSUK

The school's religious ethos continues to meet the expectations of AMSUK.

What the school could do to improve further

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

- continuing the development of strategies for providing additional work and challenge for the most able pupils
- developing and extending the classroom space available for teaching and learning, including in the EYFS, as soon as financial resources permit.