



# New Horizon Community School

## Independent School

**Better  
education  
and care**

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number      383/6119  
Unique Reference Number      130274  
Inspection number              296850  
Inspection dates                17-18 January 2007  
Reporting inspector              Ms Honoree Gordon HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
11-16	12 February 2007	296850

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

## Information about the school

New Horizon Community School provides an education based on Islamic beliefs for Muslim girls between the ages of 11 and 16. There are currently 74 pupils on roll. Most come from the immediate surrounding area near the centre of Leeds, but a few come from further afield. The school does not select pupils on entry by academic ability.

## Evaluation of the school

The quality of education is good and the school meets all but one detail in one of the regulations. The school has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. It meets its aim of providing "an Islamic education that is relevant to the modern world". The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is good. The girls show exemplary attitudes to learning. The curriculum is good and the teaching is satisfactory. As a result, the girls make satisfactory progress and they reach broadly average standards.

## Quality of education

The quality of education is good. The girls enjoy school and appreciate the good care that their teachers give to them. As one pupil typically said: "this school just keeps on improving every year". Much credit for this transformation is rightly accorded to the Headteacher.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced, reflects the ethos of the school, and meets the needs of every pupil. It is suitably planned and adequately resourced. In Key Stage 3, pupils study English, mathematics, science, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), *nashid* (Islamic songs), religious education (RE)/ Islamic studies, Qur'an, Arabic, Urdu, personal, social and health education (PSHE), and citizenship. Pupils take the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9. Provision for ICT has recently improved and is good, providing pupils with increased opportunities to develop a wide range of useful skills. Following a short course, examined at the end of Year 8, pupils begin an ICT business and commerce course leading to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). Resources for ICT have improved in response

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to parental demand. However, the use of ICT to support learning is insufficiently developed in other subjects. Pupils also study eight other subjects at GCSE level, including single or double award science, Arabic and Urdu. The school has introduced a course leading to the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Level 2 qualification to enable all pupils to meet basic requirements in English and mathematics at KS4. In addition, art and design, including Islamic art, is offered at both key stages.

When studying the Qur'an, pupils learn *tajweed* (melodic style of Qur'anic recitation) and *tafseer* (explanation of the meaning of Qur'anic verses). Qur'anic studies includes *hadith* (literature regarding Prophet Muhammad's example), *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *aqida* (belief) and Islamic history. The RE/Islamic studies curriculum includes the study of the main world religions, taught in comparison with Islam.

Provision for PE is satisfactory, though restricted by lack of space. The school has improved the quality of its careers education provision and, consequently, more pupils than before move on to higher education. A reasonable range of educational visits and field trips enhance the curriculum but there are few regular extra-curricular activities to extend pupils' skills and enrich their learning experience. This has been noted by a small minority of parents and students in the pre-inspection questionnaires.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with much that is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed subject specialists. Pupils comment that where teaching is best, the lessons are often fun. They mention how Islamic studies is brought to life and holds their interest. In an outstanding English lesson, Year 11 pupils showed good skills in presenting and sustaining a point of view when discussing topical themes such as identity cards and animal rights. However, oral skills are insufficiently developed across all subjects. The school has agreed a strategy to promote literacy in all subjects, and this is done effectively by some of the teachers.

Teachers prepare their lessons well. However, in some lessons the methods and approaches used by teachers are too narrow. Sometimes lessons are over dominated by the teacher talking, so can become rather dull. Some teachers miss opportunities to engage pupils fully and to encourage them to reflect on their learning and to express their ideas. The school judges correctly that continuous professional development is the key to sustaining the improvements made in the quality of teaching in the last two years.

Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils are set targets and their work is regularly reviewed against these. However, marking is not specific enough to tell individual pupils about how to improve in each subject. The school recognises that the progress of individual pupils needs to be monitored more closely to raise standards further.

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As a result of the good curricular provision and the satisfactory teaching, pupils make satisfactory progress. Some pupils make good progress from their starting points. Attainment in the GCSE examinations is broadly average. Results in 2006 were much better than in the previous year, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve particularly highly in RE/Islamic studies and Urdu. However, their achievement in a minority of subjects is not as high as the school expects. Pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and those who learn English as an additional language are enabled to achieve as well as their peers through appropriate class and individual support.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils**

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. The instilling of religious and moral values, tolerance and social responsibility is given high priority. The school attaches great importance to nurturing pupils' religious beliefs. The Islamic studies curriculum contributes well to this. Although academic achievement is given a high priority, the school seeks also to develop a critical and knowledgeable approach to learning. Pupils learn about their community and heritage, including the diversity of faiths within their community. They have developed active links within the local community, with other religions and schools all of which help to develop the pupils' awareness beyond the family and home and promote tolerance.

The behaviour of the girls is exemplary. They are cheerful and quietly confident. The school helps them to realise their maximum potential and to be confident in their own identity. Prefects and merits systems encourage responsibility, and excellent attitudes to learning. Success in inter-school competitions is developing pupils' confidence and pride in their school. For example, the school gained first prize in an inter-school competition for promoting peace run by the Leeds Metropolitan University.

The school stresses to parents that good attendance at school is linked to achievement and works closely with them to encourage this. Attendance has improved in recent years and is now at the national average.

The PSHE programme is overseen personally by the headteacher. This provides pupils with information and opportunities for discussion on personal matters as preparation for growing up. Information about relationships is closely linked to Islamic teaching.

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## **Welfare, health and safety of the pupils**

The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. All but one of the required policies and checks are in place to underpin this. The school must ensure that it keeps a copy of the risk assessments it does for visits out of school.

This is a happy community where getting on with each other matters. The code of conduct stresses respect for each other and for the teachers. Relationships between the pupils and the staff are excellent. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they can talk to the teachers; as one girl's comment summed it up: "We are like one". Pupils say that there is hardly ever any bullying. Should this happen they know that there are procedures which they could follow. The rewards and sanctions system, with merit certificates for good work, operates very well to encourage effort and achievement. Pupils' views are listened to through the school council and action taken if required, for example to improve the toilets, to provide healthier meal options and to make changes in how the school day and subjects are organised.

The responses to the parents' and pupils' questionnaires were very positive. A minority of parents and pupils expressed concern over opportunities for physical exercise and the restricted range of activities at school. Inspectors judge that the promotion of a healthy lifestyle is satisfactory. Whilst facilities for PE are limited, they are sufficient to allow for outdoor and indoor exercise. The headteacher is very keen to improve what the school can offer, within the constraints of its small size and staff numbers. The PSHE programme teaches pupils about the importance of being healthy

## **Suitability of the proprietor and staff**

The procedures meet the regulations. The school conducts all the required checks on staff prior to their appointment to the school. The teaching staff are well-qualified in their subjects and, although many have not had formal training as teachers they have received some professional development to enhance their teaching skills.

## **School's premises and accommodation**

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory. The school has moved to new premises since the time of the last inspection. There is one main building with classrooms, a small art room, two ICT rooms and a hall which serves as a small gymnasium and recreation area during lunch and breaktimes. The main building houses the school office and the prayer room. There are three temporary buildings on the playground. These are suitable for purpose and comfortable. One serves as a science laboratory.

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The school is clean, tidy and well-maintained. Resources to support learning are adequate and have benefited from recent investment, for example there are new books for the core subjects. A minority of pupils expressed concern about the access to computers. Although not all of the ICT equipment is up-to-date and some does not work reliably, inspectors judge that resources are sufficient to allow effective teaching and good opportunities for qualifications in ICT.

### **Provision of information for parents, carers and others**

The school provides all the information required for parents. There is an attractive prospectus, recently updated, which sets out very clearly the information on the aims, curriculum, policies and procedures. Parents receive an annual report and have opportunities to come into school to discuss their daughter's progress.

### **Procedures for handling complaints**

Parents are informed through the prospectus of how they might make a complaint. The procedures for handling complaints meet the regulation. There have been no complaints in the last year.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision for pupils' health, safety and well-being (standard 3) and must:

- maintain records on risk assessments as part of its implementation of the policy relating to the health and safety of pupils on activities outside the school (paragraph 3(2)(c)).

### **What the school could do to improve further**

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

- encourage further professional development for teachers and the sharing of good practice so that teachers can extend the range of strategies they use to promote learning.
- increase the opportunities across different subjects for pupils to use ICT to support their learning.

- refine the systems for assessing pupils' progress so that pupils are clear about what they have to do in the different subjects in order to improve.

## School details

Name of school	New Horizon Community School		
DfES number	383/6119		
Unique reference number	130274		
Type of school	Islamic Girls		
Status	Independent non-selective		
Date school opened	September 1996		
Age range of pupils	11-16		
Gender of pupils	Girls		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 74	Total: 74
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 0
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 1	Total: 1
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,000		
Address of school	New Horizon Community School Newton Hill House Newton Hill Road Leeds West Yorkshire LS7 4JE		
Telephone number	0113 262 4001		
Fax number	0113 229 5758		
Email address	nhcsleeds@newtonhillhouse.wanadoo.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs S Dambatta		
Proprietor	Islamia Educational Trust Leeds		
Reporting inspector	Ms Honoree Gordon HMI		
Dates of inspection	17-18 January 2007		