



EQUI

Faith-Led, Results-Driven: Unlocking the Potential of Islamic Schools

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Introduction

Rising costs and concerns over standards across the UK have been putting the education sector under pressure. Some families turn to independent schools in their search for good quality education for their children. However, with the average fee per pupil for independent day schools in the UK at nearly £19,000 per year,¹ this option is only affordable for a minority of families.

There is a strong tradition of faith schools providing high quality education in England, both independent and state-funded. Christian faith schools continue to make up the vast majority of faith schools, with only a small number associated with the Muslim, Jewish and Sikh faiths.² Of nearly 8,000 state-funded faith schools in the UK, over two-thirds are Anglican and

most of the rest are Roman Catholic.³ State-funded faith schools must follow the national curriculum, with some flexibility over religious studies content. Independent faith schools have more autonomy over curricular content, and many independent Islamic faith schools integrate Islamic education into their teaching and learning.

As of August 2025, a total of 215 independent faith schools of various denominations were inspected by Ofsted.⁴ Islamic schools make up a significant number of independent schools, with circa 190 independent Islamic faith schools in the UK.⁵ These serve a diverse student body, constituting approximately 7.5% of all independent schools in the UK.⁶ More than 1 million students have been educated in independent Islamic



schools in the last 30 years,⁷ highlighting the appeal of these institutions for communities seeking high-quality, faith-informed education at an affordable cost.

In this context, independent Islamic faith schools in England provide a striking and often overlooked model of success. With lower annual fees, these schools provide high quality, values-driven education and consistently achieve results that surpass national averages. They also operate against a wider backdrop of rising school expenditure. In 2025-26, the cost of state-funded education for 5- to 16-year-olds was approximately £8,000 per pupil,⁸ representing a 59% increase in per pupil funding since 2010-11.⁹ In comparison, the independent Islamic faith schools we reviewed charged an average of £4,113 per student per year, while achieving excellent results.¹⁰

This report assesses the performance of lower-fee independent Islamic faith schools to see what can be learned and how those lessons could be replicated by government to offset rising educational costs and raise achievement. It also explores the distinctive principles, practices and performance of the schools, drawing on Ofsted inspections, Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) reports and exam level attainment.

We present an analysis of 10 case studies from across England, looking at their fee structure alongside their delivery of student attainment, their moral development and civic responsibility, outlining important learnings for government and the wider education sector.

While there is a widespread assumption that faith schools may hamper social cohesion because of the prevalence of one faith identity, this research found that the independent Islamic faith schools featured in this report strongly emphasise the alignment of Islamic and British values. They promote tolerance and seek to foster responsible and active British citizens.

The learning and teaching are focused on raising outward-looking and community-minded members of society, rather than insular and intolerant views. These schools encourage children to relate positively to their faith identity and be proactive contributors to their wider communities at the same time.

Importantly, the admissions policies of the schools featured in this report do not make belonging to the Muslim faith an entry requirement. Many admissions policies explicitly welcome pupils from all faith backgrounds.¹¹ Independent schools cannot discriminate against a child on the basis of faith in their admissions, but faith schools can give higher priority to children belonging to a specific faith if the school is oversubscribed.¹²

In charging lower fees, but achieving high success rates, independent Islamic faith schools demonstrate that academic excellence does not need to come at an unaffordable price. In an age where education is increasingly underfunded, their success invites urgent questions: how are they achieving so much with lower fees? What role do faith, community and values-based school leadership play in delivering successful educational outcomes? And what might mainstream education learn from these models?



Key Findings

- **Independent Islamic faith schools deliver academic excellence at a fraction of the cost.**

These schools consistently outperform national academic benchmarks, offering one of the clearest examples of best-value education provision in the UK. Across the schools in our case study sample, average General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) performance from independent faith schools in eight subjects was 36% above the national average. This is despite them operating at around 49% less funding per pupil compared to state schools and around 78% less per pupil compared to independent day schools.

- **Independent Islamic faith schools foster confident, conscientious British citizens.** Students are taught to take pride in their faith while embracing diversity and shared British values. They emerge as active citizens, ready to contribute to public life with a strong sense of duty, leadership and civic responsibility. These outcomes challenge the misconception that faith competes with social integration in modern-day Britain. Instead, they demonstrate how faith can be a powerful driver of inclusion, motivation and excellence.

- **Values-driven ambition delivers strong academic and personal outcomes.** These schools strive to combine academic rigour with a strong moral framework. By aligning high academic standards with values of sincerity, service and self-improvement, they show that faith-based education can strengthen, rather than limit, academic ambition. They also integrate daily worship into the curriculum, creating holistic learning environments that support spiritual development alongside academic growth. A shared sense of responsibility between families, school leaders and local communities is aimed at enhancing pupil support, reinforcing expectations and maintaining strong behavioural and educational standards despite limited resources.



Academic Success

Independent Islamic schools in the UK have built a record of academic success that challenges prevailing assumptions about faith schools. Despite often operating on modest fees compared with mainstream independent schools, many Islamic faith schools consistently outperform national averages, particularly in outcomes for GCSEs and Standard Assessment Tests (SATs). The achievements of independent Islamic faith schools show that strong educational outcomes are not solely driven by financial resources, but also by community and values, as well as a dedication to serve local families and high aspirations for all students.

The case studies in the appendix of this report highlight the work of 10 independent Islamic faith schools. At the GCSE level (see Table 1 below), 'Attainment 8' in these schools ranged from 50.3 to 65.4, all of which surpass the national average for all schools of 43.7. Pass rates in English and Maths at grades 9-5 are equally well above the 41.5% national average, ranging from 66.7% to 83.3%. Performance in the EBacc subjects further demonstrates these strengths, with all schools surpassing the national average EBacc Point Score of 3.84, ranging from scores of 5.42 to 6.27. In the case-study sample, average GCSE performance from independent faith schools across eight subjects was therefore 36% above the national average for all schools (59.3 compared to 43.7).

GCSE Attainment of Featured Independent Islamic Faith Schools with National Comparator (November 2025)				
School	Location	Attainment 8¹³	Grade 9-5 in English and Maths	EBacc Average Point Score¹⁴
<i>National Average (of all state-funded and special schools)¹⁵</i>	England	45.9	45.2%	4.08
<i>National Average (of all schools)¹⁶</i>	England	43.7	41.5%	3.84
Al-Aqsa School Trust	Leicester	61.2	80.0%	5.71
Azhar Academy Girls School	London	64.9	74.5%	6.27
Brondesbury College	London	65.4	81.0%	5.97
Jameah Academy	Leicester	56.6	69.6%	5.44
Jamiatul Ummah School	London	58.1	81.8%	5.42
London Islamic School	London	58.6	66.7%	5.74
Normanton House School	Derby	50.3	83.3%	5.56

Table 1: Results at featured independent Islamic faith schools at GCSE level, compared with the national average.¹⁷ The state-funded and special schools' national averages in England are the comparator used by government.

At the SATs level (see Table 2 below), outcomes are similarly strong, with 100% of the pupils at three of the selected Islamic faith schools meeting the expected standards in at least one subject. All featured primary schools exceeded the national average in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPAG) and Maths, and all but one exceeded it in Reading.

SATs Attainment of Featured Independent Islamic Faith Schools with National Comparator (2024)				
School	Location	Reading	Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar	Maths
National Average (all schools)¹⁸	England	74%	72%	73%
Al Ameen Primary School	Birmingham	67%	86%	81%
Al-Aqsa School Trust	Leicester	86%	90%	90%
Al-Ikhlaas Primary School	Lancashire	86%	90%	100%
Leicester Islamic Academy	Leicester	88%	100%	95%
Normanton House School	Derby	93%	100%	87%

Table 2: Percentage of students meeting the expected standards at featured independent Islamic faith schools at the SATs level, compared with the national average of all schools in England.¹⁹

Ofsted inspection data for 134 independent Islamic schools also shows that the sector broadly matches national benchmarks for quality. While 13% of Islamic faith schools are rated as *requires improvement* (see Table 3 below), a figure slightly above the national average of 9%, only 2 schools (1%) are rated as *inadequate*, compared to a national average of 3%. The vast majority of Islamic faith schools (86%) were rated as *good* or *outstanding*.

Ofsted Rating	No of Islamic Schools	% of Islamic Schools	National Average
Outstanding	17	13%	16%
Good	98	73%	73%
Requires Improvement	17	13%	9%
Inadequate	2	1%	3%

Table 3: Ofsted ratings for 134 independent Islamic faith schools.²⁰

The above-par results at both the GCSE and SATs levels are also supported by the findings of robust inspections by Ofsted and the ISI, which are explored in detail in the case studies section of this report. Together, the data and inspection findings highlight a pattern of high attainment and personal development delivered on modest budgets. Several factors help explain these outcomes.

The academic culture in many Islamic schools is shaped by high parental expectations and strong community involvement. Education is often seen not only as a path to personal advancement, but as a religious duty. Seeking knowledge is framed as a form of worship; a perspective that fosters deep respect for learning from an early age. Islamic faith schools combine academic education with faith guidance and communal practice.

Moreover, the lower number of pupils in each school allows more time to be dedicated to individual needs. The total number of pupils in the schools featured in this report ranged from 118 to 618, and the mean number of students at the schools is 245.²¹ As of 2023, the mean size of independent schools in general was significantly higher at 397 students.²² In smaller schools, teachers are able to focus their attention more on individual students, track their progress more closely, adapt teaching strategies and offer targeted interventions. Classrooms tend to be orderly and focused, with Ofsted often noting high levels of discipline and motivation among pupils.

“Read in the name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists); He created man from a clinging clot. Read and your Lord is most Generous, Who taught to write with the pen, taught man what he knew not.”

Qur’an (96:1–5)

The Role of Education in the Qur’an and Prophetic Practice

The education of young people as a religious obligation is rooted in the Qur’an and Hadith (reports on the Prophet Muhammad’s life). The first word revealed to the Prophet was ‘iqra’ (‘read’), often understood to mean that learning and teaching are among the primary obligations of all Muslims. From the earliest days of Islam, the Prophet served as a teacher and encouraged all his followers to learn and exercise curiosity. His mosque in Medina became a centre of learning, where religious principles were shared alongside practical and ethical knowledge. Today, this legacy continues in Islamic schools across the UK, which combine academic success with moral formation.

In many Islamic faith schools, the moral and spiritual coherence of the school environment contributes to a sense of direction and discipline. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to strive for *ihsaan* (‘excellence’) in all that they do. This ethos often translates into positive attitudes to learning, behaviour and aspiration. This is also reflected in assemblies, where lessons on Islamic values allow for discussion about being good and responsible members of the community, which is further reinforced by the ways in which these schools rely on the input and support of community members. This also encourages their students to pursue careers that

are centred on serving the community, such as medicine, teaching and policing. While values-based teaching can be applied in a range of different school contexts, faith-inspired values and principles are often particularly powerful motivators.

Achievement, in this context, is not narrowly defined. Many Islamic schools pair academic excellence with high levels of personal development, leadership and community service. Their success highlights a model of education where faith, values and ambition work together, and where high attainment is not a coincidence but the outcome of a clearly defined educational vision.



Excelling While Committing to Low Fees

“Lower fees do not compromise quality because our model focuses on value-driven purposeful education rather than commercial goals.”

Khaleda Begum

Headteacher (Al-Ikhlaas Primary School)

Independent Islamic faith schools provide education at a fraction of the cost of other providers, including both state schools and mainstream independent institutions. The average annual fee for an independent day school in the UK is approximately £19,000, while state schools receive on average approximately £8,000 per pupil in 2025–26. Independent faith schools operate at around 49% less per pupil compared to state schools and around 78% less per pupil compared to independent day schools.

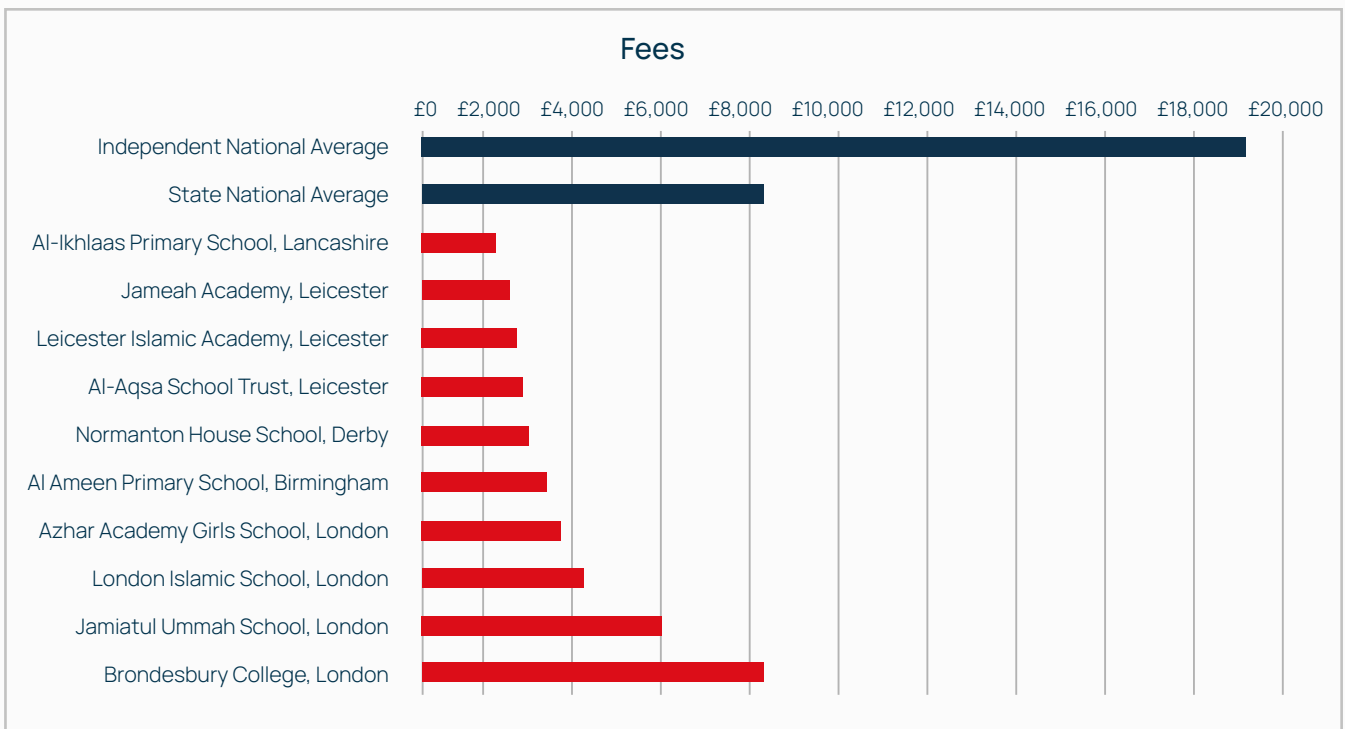


Chart 1: Data for fees across featured independent Islamic faith schools compared with independent and state national averages. The average fee is given for schools with fee scales.²³

Even among higher-fee Islamic faith schools (see Chart 1 above), such as Jamiatul Ummah (£6,120) and Brondesbury College (£8,975) in London, costs remain significantly below the independent schools' average. Many higher-fee institutions, including Jamiatul Ummah School and Azhar Academy Girls School, are also among the most academically successful. These examples show that high attainment can be achieved at a fraction of mainstream independent school costs. Low-fee, high-achievement models reflect a deliberate commitment to accessibility. They enable lower-income families to benefit from values-led, high-quality education and promote social mobility. Some schools, such as Azhar Academy Girls School and Al-Ikhlaas Primary School, also offer reduced fees where there is more than one child from the same family enrolled in the school.

For families unable to afford mainstream independent education, Islamic schools provide a high-quality alternative that aligns with both academic goals and religious values. The Muslim Parents Survey 2025 revealed strong nationwide demand for affordable, high-quality Islamic education.²⁴ Rather than diluting standards, financial constraint has, in many cases, reinforced them, strengthening the schools' commitment to providing an outstanding education to their pupils rather than allowing low fees to cause institutional settings to fall short of high standards.

Operating on modest budgets requires tapping into diverse resources. Many Islamic schools supplement fee income with charitable donations, Zakat (a mandatory payment of 2.5% for Muslims who own wealth over a certain amount) and the volunteer efforts of parents, community members and alumni. Some schools are supported by wider charitable foundations or mosque networks that provide governance support, access to facilities, volunteers or other resources. In many cases, headteachers report that fee income alone does not fully cover operational costs.

“Muslim schools are community-centred, not profit-driven. Low fees reflect our commitment to making quality, values-based education affordable and accessible to all, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent children from benefiting from an excellent education.”

Ashfaque Chowdhury

Chair of the Association of Muslim Schools

The success of independent Islamic faith schools is underpinned by mission-driven leadership and deep community trust, with parents playing an active stakeholder role. Staff are also often motivated by a sense of religious duty and public service, rather than material incentives. Independent schools are not bound to follow the national pay scales and can set their own pay, which can sometimes be lower than in state-funded education. One headteacher interviewed for this report confirmed that teachers at independent Islamic faith schools are sometimes only paid around 50% of the salary of their colleagues in the state sector.²⁵



Teacher salaries are a cause for concern throughout the education sector. 32% of teachers from the independent sector across the UK report that their pay could be better, while 13% said that their pay was inadequate.²⁶ 39% of independent school teachers also felt that the cost of living crisis has affected their standard of living a lot.²⁷ Levels of dissatisfaction with pay are even higher in state-funded schools.²⁸ Though it is difficult to determine the salaries of teachers at independent Islamic faith schools specifically, the fact that the schools generally have lower student fees than other schools within the independent sector would suggest that their pay may indeed be lower than the average independent school teacher. An anonymous headteacher interviewed for this report said that they simply cannot pay the teachers what they deserve and that their salaries would be far higher in the state sector.

Yet, this report shows that, while resources are scarce, priorities are sharpened, and teaching, pastoral care and spiritual development are delivered with precision. Despite low pay, teachers at independent Islamic faith schools feel that they work for a higher purpose (faith in God) and for the sake of the children, rather than for material gain.²⁹

“It doesn’t matter whether it’s an Islamic school or not. If the teachers actually love and care for the students, there will be positive outcomes... Because they’re doing it for a higher purpose, there is a lot of self-sacrifice.”

Abdelhamid Chachi
Headteacher (Al-Aqsa School)

Another financial pressure impacting independent Islamic faith schools is the introduction of VAT on school fees. The schools featured in this report educate children from diverse backgrounds, not

all of which are wealthy, and so some parents have had to remove their children from these schools due to the increase in fees caused by the addition of VAT.³⁰ If the 10 schools featured in this report were to close, it would cost the government approximately £20 million to educate their children.³¹ It is in the government’s strong interest to support independent Islamic faith schools, for example, through VAT exemptions for low-cost independent schools. The added cost of schooling children currently catered for by independent faith schools is a much greater sum than the £1.4 million the government would receive in VAT for the students at these 10 schools.³² Exempting lower-fee independent schools from additional costs would protect educational access and help sustain schools that deliver public benefit with limited resources.

The schools’ commitment is reflected in statements by Ofsted inspectors below. These findings highlight the professionalism, ambition and community commitment that characterise many Islamic faith schools. Despite operating on tight budgets, their performance outcomes signal best-value practice, combining academic standards with moral development and faith-based leadership. In doing so, they provide an important example of how resource-conscious, mission-driven schooling can meet, and even exceed, national expectations.



Islam and Identity in Daily Student Life

“These values and ethos are not just stuck on our walls... they are in every lesson.”

Anonymous headteacher at an independent Islamic faith school

In independent Islamic schools, faith is central to their mission, culture, curriculum and community life. It shapes the values a school is driven by, guides behavioural expectations, affirms pupils' identities and fosters a strong sense of belonging and purpose.

Spiritual practices are embedded into the daily rhythm of school life. In many schools, time for daily Salah (the ritual prayer that practising Muslims pray five times a day) is accommodated in timetables, which allows students and teachers to come together communally and take time for spirituality and mindfulness. This is often supplemented by dedicated sessions for Qur'an studies and school-wide assemblies discussing Islamic teachings. In some schools, Du'as (informal prayers) are recited before lessons, Islamic greetings form part of everyday interactions and religious

observances such as Ramadan and Eid are fully integrated into the school calendar. These shared practices give space for not only personal spirituality but also a deep sense of cohesion and community.

The principle of including faith-based practices in independent Islamic faith schools is not dissimilar to both independent and state schools associated with other faiths. For example, many independent and state-funded schools are associated with the Church of England. Approximately 1 million children attend Church of England schools and 500 independent schools declare themselves to have an ethos shared with the Church of England.³³ A key component of this ethos is collective worship, which is planned and delivered in collaboration with vicars and church members to provide the “opportunity for pupils and adults to encounter faith by engaging in conversations about God, both as individuals and together.”³⁴ The emphasis within this collective worship on exploring the big questions of life, fostering respect and affirming faith-based values is similar to related practices at Islamic faith schools.



Faith plays a vital role in identity formation in independent Islamic faith schools. For many pupils, particularly those from minority backgrounds, Islamic faith schools offer a space where their identity is affirmed and normalised. Pupils see their faith reflected in the environment, staff and ethos, which helps to build confidence, emotional security and a strong sense of self. School leaders' experience and existing research emphasise how this affirmation of identity supports academic engagement and wellbeing.³⁵

Faith also provides a moral and disciplinary framework. Behavioural policies are often grounded in Islamic concepts such as Akhlaq (character), Sabr (patience) and Ihsaan (excellence). Pupils are taught that positive qualities are not just social expectations but religious virtues. Staff use Islamic teachings to encourage reflection and moral reasoning, helping pupils to take ownership of their behaviour and grow in ethical maturity. This grounding in Islamic values is important to many parents. 82% of British Muslim parents who send their children to Islamic schools say faith-based values were a main reason for choosing their child's school.³⁶

“We believe faith is central to nurturing well-rounded young people. Islam provides a moral framework that shapes character, strengthens identity and inspires pupils to serve their communities. Faith underpins everything we do – guiding behaviour, informing curriculum choices and motivating pupils to pursue excellence for the benefit of themselves and wider society.”

Ashfaque Chowdhury
 Chair of the Association of Muslim Schools

Leaders in independent Islamic schools design a curriculum with faith as a significant source of inspiration. Many Islamic schools enrich the national

curriculum with faith-based perspectives. Islamic Studies is taught alongside core subjects, providing pupils with the theological and ethical foundations to understand their faith intellectually and apply it in a contemporary context. Students are also given the option to take the Alim/Alimah programme, an intensive course lasting four to six years in traditional Islamic Studies designed to train religious scholars. Many schools offer Arabic as a language qualification, providing students with the ability to connect with religious texts spiritually as well as with global industries and communities, a key employment opportunity.

Importantly, Islamic faith schools do not see their religious ethos as separate from broader society. All schools featured in this report framed their values of respect, compassion, justice and social responsibility as fully aligned with British values. Pupils are taught to see themselves as active citizens, and community giving is a practical expression of that. Whether supporting local civic campaigns, leading foodbank drives or fundraising for humanitarian causes, pupils are encouraged to live out their faith through action, benefitting not just their faith communities, but all of society.

In short, faith in Islamic schools is not just practised: it is lived, taught and woven into every part of the educational experience. It drives high expectations, moral clarity and a sense of responsibility to self, community and society.



Policy Recommendations

The achievements of independent Islamic faith schools, at a comparatively low cost, provide a thought-provoking example of the role of faith, identity and community in education and school leadership. The education that these schools provide is fundamentally values-based, aiming to nurture young minds into responsible and compassionate adulthood.

This research has helped develop policy recommendations which would further the success of independent Islamic faith schools and aid the learning from this success, so it can be replicated in other schools, regardless of their faith affiliation.

1. The Department for Education (DfE) should facilitate structured opportunities for shared learning between the leadership of independent Islamic faith schools and other educational providers.

The DfE should promote and help coordinate formal mechanisms, including joint training sessions, thematic roundtables or inclusion in regional multi-school networks. High-performing Islamic schools have valuable expertise in values-led leadership, parental engagement and holistic development that could benefit the wider system. Several headteachers reported that misconceptions and stereotypes about Islamic schools posed a unique challenge that other independent schools do not face, but these can be mitigated by bringing teachers from independent Islamic faith schools into networks and partnerships with other educational providers to share learning and good practice.

2. Local authorities should support interfaith and interschool community initiatives.

As part of their social cohesion strategies, local authorities should actively promote initiatives such as school open days, interfaith education fairs and local community events that bring together different schools, families and civic actors. These efforts would help challenge misconceptions, build cross-community understanding and position faith schools as active contributors to local educational and civic life.

3. The DfE should ensure that teachers at independent Islamic faith schools have access to regional and national teacher training.

Many independent Islamic faith schools operate outside traditional professional development networks, despite delivering strong educational outcomes. Headteachers called on government to support their teacher training capacity, especially for early career teachers. Facilitating their inclusion would support workforce development, enable sharing of good practice and ensure that all pupils benefit from high-quality, well-trained staff regardless of the school's funding model.

4. Introduce a VAT threshold for low-fee schools.

His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) and the DfE should work together to explore setting a VAT exemption threshold for independent schools charging minimal fees - for example, a VAT exemption for fees under £5,000 per annum. For the featured schools, for every £1 such a VAT exemption would cost, the government would save over £14. These institutions are often mission-driven and community-funded, serving working-class families who would otherwise be priced out of independent education or an educational setting that suits their faith needs. The added cost of VAT to parents on top of the fees

may force them to put their children through state-funded education, which may in turn lead to closures of independent Islamic faith schools, resulting in additional pressures on the state school system.

5. Inspecting bodies should recognise the successes of low-fee independent schools.

Inspecting bodies, such as Ofsted, should continue to refine how their inspection frameworks acknowledge schools that achieve strong outcomes despite resource constraints. Faith schools that deliver both academic and spiritual development on modest budgets should be recognised for the public value they provide, particularly when they work with underserved communities.

“Most of all, recognising the valuable role Islamic schools play in promoting social cohesion, community service and academic achievement would go a long way. When faith schools feel understood and valued, it empowers them to continue serving their communities with confidence and pride.”

Khaleda Begum

Headteacher (Al-Ikhlaas Primary School)



Lessons for Values-Driven Education

Independent Islamic faith schools in the UK are delivering some of the most compelling results in the education system today. With annual fees of the featured schools averaging £4,113, a fraction of both per-pupil funding in state education and the £19,000 charged by the average independent day school, these institutions are achieving outcomes that rival, and often exceed, national educational outcomes.

This success is more than just about results. The featured schools actively seek to produce responsible and tolerant British citizens by integrating extra-curricular activities that foster community-mindedness and cultural awareness into their teaching and learning. They provide a concrete example of the compatibility of British and Islamic values, which are centred on the same principles, such as mutual respect, tolerance and social responsibility. It is upon these principles that a more cohesive and inclusive society is founded.

The success of these schools is not built by an abundance of resources, but by a dedication to providing children with a high-quality, faith-inspired education that is affordable to a greater number of families. Centred around faith-based values, aspirations for academic excellence and a belief in the transformative power of education, these schools are producing academically accomplished, socially responsible and morally minded young people. Independent Islamic schools ensure their students leave education with excellent grades and a strong start to their adult lives and careers. In doing so, they challenge assumptions about what drives attainment, and show that purpose,

community culture and care can matter more than resources alone.

These schools prove what is possible when educational leaders adapt to low resource contexts and are driven to produce outstanding results to serve their local young people. They show that values-driven ambition can and does lead to exceptional outcomes. They prove that leaders in education should not limit their aims to producing top grades. Instead, they show that cultivating a strong sense of citizenship and duty to the local community in all their students is equally as important – the two are not mutually exclusive but support and reinforce each other.

At a time when education is under financial strain, and the sector is struggling with widening inequality, the example of independent Islamic faith schools offers insight into the effective use of resources as well as inspiration from leaders committed to better serving their communities.



Appendix: Case Studies

The following case studies are examples of independent Islamic faith schools that are exceeding national averages in educational results whilst charging lower fees than the average independent school, and, in many cases, lower fees than the cost per pupil of state-funded education.

Al Ameen Primary School (AAPS)

Location: Birmingham

Established: 2005

Annual Fees: £3,600³⁷

Pupils: 168 (ages 3-11)

Ofsted Success

AAPS meets all Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) expectations and has received strong Ofsted feedback,³⁸ having last been rated *good* in 2017.³⁹ Ofsted inspectors noted that "leaders are constantly striving to improve outcomes for pupils in a safe and caring school environment. There is a strong sense of community and family that reflects the school's caring ethos."⁴⁰

Academic Achievements

Key Stage 2 SATs Attainment:

- 81% of students meet the expected standards in Maths.⁴¹ (national average: 73%).
- 67% of students meet the expected standards in Reading.⁴² (national average: 74%).
- 86% of students meet the expected standards in Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.⁴³ (national average: 72%).

Values and Ethos

AAPS was established to offer affordable, high-quality Islamic education. Its values are built on faith, family and character.⁴⁴ The school's aim is to cultivate children who are not only successful learners but principled, caring citizens. A community ethos is embedded through school life. There is an emphasis on integrity, kindness and respect - qualities seen as central to both Islamic practice and good citizenship. Parental involvement is strongly encouraged. Weekly newsletters, family learning events and parenting workshops ensure that families and school staff work as a unified team in each child's development.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Daily collective worship features short Qur'anic reflections and moral teachings. Practising faith helps affirm pupils' faith identity, foster mindfulness, promote unity and encourage ethical engagement.⁴⁵ Moral development is modelled by staff through a "hidden curriculum" of manners, honesty and kindness.⁴⁶ Pupils are encouraged to make amends when mistakes happen and are supported in learning from them. Social development is rooted in building values of care, responsibility and respect for the wider community to "develop confident, respectful, active British Muslims."⁴⁷ Cultural awareness is fostered through engagement with other cultures and faiths.

Al-Aqsa School Trust

Location: Leicester

Established: 1998

Annual Fees: £2,760 (Primary), £3,175 (Secondary)⁴⁸

Pupils: 313 (ages 3-16)

Ofsted Success

Al-Aqsa School Trust was rated *good* in its January 2025 Ofsted inspection.⁴⁹ Inspectors highlighted the strong relationships between staff and pupils, which create a safe, supportive and welcoming environment.⁵⁰ Pupils describe the school as having a “family feel,” where they are valued, encouraged and able to thrive.⁵¹

Academic Achievements

Key Stage 2 SATs Attainment:⁵²

- Maths: 90% (national average: 73%).
- Reading: 86% (national average: 74%).
- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar: 90% (national average: 72%).

GCSE Attainment:⁵³

- Attainment 8 Score: 61.2 (England average: 45.9)
- Grades 9–5 in English and Maths GCSEs: 80% (England average: 45.2%)
- EBacc Average Point Score: 5.71 (England average: 4.08)

Values and Ethos

Al-Aqsa's headteacher, Mr Abdelhamid Chachi, believes that developing good manners and character underpins the school's mission.⁵⁴ This was noted by Ofsted too, which found that its ethos is rooted in values of kindness, trust and good manners that are embedded in daily school life.⁵⁵ Discrimination and poor language are not tolerated, and pupils actively promote equality and fairness. For Mr Chachi, the most important take-away for his pupils is being kind to everyone, regardless of their faith or socioeconomic status.⁵⁶ The same is expected of the teachers who have a moral and faith-based responsibility to their students that outweighs material incentives of the job.⁵⁷ Mr Chachi described the teaching team as being part of a family, with whom he has weekly teacher development sessions about pedagogy and to receive feedback from the teachers themselves.⁵⁸

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

The school provides wide-ranging opportunities for leadership, responsibility and enrichment. Pupils participate in enterprise projects, contribute to the school council and shape improvements to the school environment, such as new playground markings.⁵⁹ Moral education is explored through debates and classroom discussions. For example, pupils examine the morality of animal testing from Islamic and Christian perspectives, encouraging critical thinking and interfaith understanding. Social responsibility is also taught as a practice, such as through volunteering at foodbanks, litter-picking and bake sales.⁶⁰

Relationships education reinforces respect, consent and wellbeing.⁶¹ Cultural awareness is broadened through trips to places such as Warwick Castle and the Curve Theatre, alongside 'Culture Day', which celebrates the diversity of pupils' backgrounds.⁶² Faith-based practices, combined with an inclusive outlook, prepare pupils to navigate life confidently in modern Britain.

“We are preparing these children to be good human beings, to be kind, to be loving, to be caring, to be accountable, to be trustworthy. All of that to me holds ... value. When you instil those things, a child feels like they have value in themselves.”

Abdelhamid Chachi
Headteacher (Al-Aqsa School)

Al-Ikhlaas Primary School (AIPS)

Location: Lancashire

Established: 2010

Annual Fees: £2,500 (with reduced fees for those with 2-4 children in the school)⁶³

Pupils: 152 (ages 3-11)

Ofsted Success

AIPS was rated *good* by Ofsted in 2021, but rated *outstanding* for behaviour and attitudes, personal development and early years provision.⁶⁴ Inspectors highlighted the exemplary conduct of pupils, describing them as “extremely polite and well mannered” and noting that lessons are free from disruption, creating an environment where children “thrive and succeed.”⁶⁵

Academic Achievements

Key Stage 2 SATs Results:⁶⁶

- Maths: 100% (national average: 73%).
- Reading: 86% (national average: 74%).
- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar: 90% (national average: 72%).
- Writing: 100%.
- Across all four subjects, 80% was achieved by pupils at AIPS, as compared to the national average of 61%.

Values and Ethos

The school's mission statement captures its dual focus: “The pursuance of academic excellence bound by a strong moral ethos.”⁶⁷ Rooted in the Islamic tradition and aligned with British values, the school promotes tolerance, inclusion and social responsibility. This ethos is visible in pupils' daily routines, in classroom expectations and in the school's wider engagement with its community. AIPS' headteacher, Mrs Khaleda Begum, summarised the school's core values through the acronym ARISE: Amanah (responsibility; the students are taught to be accountable through looking after their things and completing their work with care), Respect, Ikhlaas (sincerity; acting with pure intentions, even when no one is watching), Shukr (gratitude) and Excellence.⁶⁸

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Faith plays a central role in school life. Pupils take part in daily duas, Qur'an recitation and memorisation, congregational prayer and Arabic study. Ofsted noted how “Islamic and secular studies are carefully interwoven in the school's curriculum,”⁶⁹ ensuring pupils receive both a strong academic foundation and spiritual formation. SMSC provision extends beyond the classroom. Pupils develop teamwork and empathy through group activities, learn to engage positively with diversity and actively participate in charitable fundraising for local causes. Inspectors observed that pupils “talked confidently about what British values mean to them and how these values aligned closely with their Muslim faith.”⁷⁰ Cultural awareness is also a key focus area, with pupils showing an exemplary understanding of other faiths and traditions, facilitated by the school's interfaith engagement through visits to places of worship.⁷¹

“Our faith-based ethos is at the heart of everything we do – it gives our schools its sense of direction, its purpose and its warmth. The Islamic values we uphold shape the way we nurture our children and ensures they are spiritually well-grounded, respected and ready to learn.”

Khaleda Begum
Headteacher (Al-Ikhlaas Primary School)

Azhar Academy Girls School (AAGS)

Location: London

Established: 2003

Annual Fees: £3,900 (discounted fee of £3,700 for those with a sibling in the school)⁷²

Pupils: 618 (ages 3-16, Primary is mixed and Secondary is girls-only)

Ofsted Success

AAGS has been rated *outstanding* by Ofsted across all categories.⁷³ Inspectors commended the school's safeguarding, academic rigour, leadership and outstanding provision for personal development, noting that pupils are "motivated and enthusiastic to learn."⁷⁴

Academic Achievements

- AAGS reports a provisional Progress 8 Score of +0.83 in 2024; a score described by the Department for Education as "well above average."⁷⁵
- Attainment 8 Score: 64.9 (England average: 45.9).⁷⁶
- Grade 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs: 74.5% (England average: 45.2%).⁷⁷
- EBacc Average Point Score: 6.27 (England average: 4.08).⁷⁸
- 52% of all GCSE grades were 7-9 grades.⁷⁹

Values and Ethos

The school's ethos is shaped by the Islamic principle of *tahdheeb al-akhlaq* (the refinement of character), as "good morals and character are central to the development of a good and responsible society."⁸⁰ Students are taught to see success not only as academic attainment but as service to other members of the community and wider society. British values and an Islamic ethos are presented as aligned, reinforcing principles of honesty, responsibility and social cohesion.⁸¹ AAGS has a collaborative ethos and purposeful parent engagement.⁸² It also provides resources for parents to support their child's literacy at home, with extra resources for parents who speak English as an additional language.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Spiritual development is deeply embedded in the curriculum, as students are required to enrol in either the Alim/ Alimah Course, the Islamic Studies Course or Hifz-ul-Qur'an (Qur'an memorisation) course.⁸³ The school aims to balance Islamic education with the national curriculum, which 80% of school time is dedicated to.⁸⁴ AAGS cultivates moral growth by instilling an ability to "recognise the difference between right and wrong" and "to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues."⁸⁵ These opportunities develop confidence, teamwork and civic engagement. According to the school website, cultural development is approached with nuance. Pupils explore their own heritage and also study a wide range of traditions and worldviews. The curriculum and enrichment programme promote British values of tolerance, democracy and mutual respect, helping students see faith and national identity as mutually enriching. The academy aims to achieve a sense of social cohesion and belonging to the wider community by arranging external visits, including campaigns as part of their Citizenship GCSE to promote social engagement and education on social issues and safety.⁸⁶

"We expect students to leave the school highly skilled, not just academically, but also articulate, confident, trustworthy and motivated young people who want to change the world for the better in whichever field they adopt to follow."

Rookshana Adam
Headteacher (AAGS)



Brondesbury College

Location: London

Established: 1996

Annual Fees: £8,975 (plus 20% VAT)⁸⁷

Pupils: 118 (ages 11-16, boys-only)

Ofsted Success

The last inspection by Ofsted in 2018 rated the college as *outstanding*.⁸⁸ Staff were described as “very motivated” and their teaching as “highly effective,” knowing “individual pupils extremely well.”⁸⁹ The latest ISI inspection from 2023 was also positive.⁹⁰

Academic Achievements

- Attainment 8 Score:⁹¹ 65.4 (England average: 45.9)
- Grades 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs: 81% (England average: 45.2%)
- EBacc Average Point Score: 5.97 (England average: 4.08)

Values and Ethos

Brondesbury was set up by Yusuf Islam (formerly known as Cat Stevens) to provide an inclusive environment for Muslim children that they deserve, aiming to provide a strong education through the application of the Qur’an and Sunnah.⁹² The college seeks to encourage analytical thinking rather than just learning by rote, offering GCSEs like Business Studies and Computer Science.⁹³

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Brondesbury states that it combines the national curriculum with a holistic approach to teaching, including the cultivation of spiritual, moral and social development.⁹⁴ This is based on the understanding that Islam will enable the students to develop as individuals and as leaders who are able to facilitate positive change within the community.⁹⁵ The students are encouraged to offer regular prayers and participate in communal worship and activities.⁹⁶ According to the ISI inspection report, principles and values that enable the development of the students as “responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens” are “actively promoted.”⁹⁷ Brondesbury also facilitates wider student development through the provision of clubs, from sports and languages, to debating and religious clubs.⁹⁸



Jameah Academy

Location: Leicester

Established: 2001

Annual Fees: £2,730 (Primary), £2,880 (Secondary)⁹⁹

Pupils: 240 (ages 5-16, girls-only)

Ofsted Success

Jameah Academy was rated *outstanding* in personal development, behaviour and welfare and *good* overall in its 2017 Ofsted inspection.¹⁰⁰ Inspectors praised the school's careers guidance and curriculum, noting that pupils are "prepared well for life beyond school" and that "excellent attitudes to learning and respectful behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning and achievement."¹⁰¹

Academic Achievements

- Attainment 8 Score: 56.6.¹⁰² (England average: 45.9)
- Grades 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs: 69.6%.¹⁰³ (England average: 45.2%)
- EBacc Average Point Score: 5.44.¹⁰⁴ (England average: 4.08)

Values and Ethos

The vision of Jameah Academy is "striving for spiritual and academic excellence."¹⁰⁵ Its mission is to empower young women to achieve both strong academic outcomes and a deep spiritual awareness of their Islamic faith. The school's STRIVE values (spirituality, tolerance, resilience, initiative, virtue and exploration) underpin teaching, behaviour and extra-curricular activity.¹⁰⁶

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Faith and moral development are woven into daily life. Pupils begin the day with Qur'anic lessons, creating a sense of peace and focus. Islamic studies are taught alongside the national curriculum, with pathways in Tahfizul Qur'an (memorisation of the Qur'an), Islamic Studies or Alimiyah courses (to produce Islamic scholars) available to students, allowing pupils to specialise in religious scholarship alongside their secular academic subjects. The school also emphasises citizenship and civic engagement. In one project, Year 9 pupils launched their own political parties and held a school-wide election.¹⁰⁷ In another, Year 7 pupils wrote blogs on environmental and social issues such as mental health and animal cruelty.¹⁰⁸ Links with external agencies and the wider community are strong. Police officers, local service representatives and community leaders regularly visit the school, supporting safeguarding and pupils' wider awareness.¹⁰⁹ Careers preparation is also prioritised, with work experience, fairs and visits to colleges helping pupils aspire to ambitious futures.

Jamiatul Ummah School (JUS)

Location: London

Established: 1997

Annual Fees: £6,120¹¹⁰

Pupils: 190 (ages 11-16, boys-only)

Ofsted Success

In its 2025 inspection, JUS was rated *outstanding* across all areas by Ofsted.¹¹¹ Inspectors praised its calm, respectful environment and a school culture that nurtures both academic ambition and spiritual maturity.

Academic Achievements

- Progress 8 score of +1.02, which is "well above average."¹¹²
- Attainment 8 Score: 58.1.¹¹³ (England average: 45.9)
- Grades 9-5 in English and Maths GCSEs: 81.8%.¹¹⁴ (England average: 45.2%)
- EBacc Average Point Score: 5.42.¹¹⁵ (England average: 4.08)
- 100% of 2024 school leavers were in further or higher education.¹¹⁶

Values and Ethos

Originally founded to steer boys in the local community away from crime and underachievement,¹¹⁷ the school now promotes both academic rigour and strong moral formation. Pupils are encouraged to view education as a route to service, not just self-advancement. The school fosters strong parental involvement, with regular meetings, workshops and faith-informed guidance supporting families to raise confident, well-rounded sons.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Spiritual growth and moral education are woven into the curriculum. Pupils participate in daily congregational prayers and Qur'an memorisation. Islamic Studies encourage deep reflection on the purpose of life and personal accountability, fostering a strong inner framework. From classroom conduct to civic projects, pupils are taught to embody values such as justice, humility and responsibility. Staff model integrity, and expectations for behaviour are consistently high. Social development is nurtured through structured leadership roles, student councils and peer mentoring. Pupils plan and participate in civic campaigns, such as traffic safety advocacy, embedding a sense of local citizenship and public service. Cultural development is grounded in a dual, British Muslim identity. Pupils are proud of their Islamic heritage while fully engaging with wider British society. Lessons address diversity, human rights and interfaith awareness, equipping students to engage thoughtfully with others in a pluralistic world.

Leicester Islamic Academy (LIA)

Location: Leicester

Established: 1982

Annual Fees: £2,886¹¹⁸

Pupils: 366 (ages 3-11)

Ofsted Success

LIA was rated *good* by Ofsted.¹¹⁹ Inspectors highlighted its cohesive and positive school culture, where pupils are happy, well-cared for and demonstrate consistently respectful behaviour.¹²⁰ Staff-pupil relationships are strong, and high expectations are embedded across the school. These expectations translate into tangible outcomes: by the time pupils leave, they are high achievers well-prepared for continuing their education and making a positive contribution to British society.

Academic Achievements

Key Stage 2 SATs Results:¹²¹

- Maths: 95% (national average: 73%).
- Reading: 88% (national average: 74%).
- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar: 100% (national average: 72%).

Values and Ethos

LIA combines academic ambition with a faith-based ethos grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah.¹²² Its mission is to educate, enable and empower young people as the leaders of tomorrow, while nurturing confidence in their Muslim identity. The vision is for every child to be resilient, academically successful, socially responsible and proud of their faith, prepared to contribute to family, community and wider society. British values are framed as complementary to Islamic principles, ensuring pupils grow into reflective and responsible citizens.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

The school excels in providing meaningful opportunities for spiritual and social development. Pupils engage in Friday enrichment activities, where they collaborate on new projects and skills, and many take leadership roles as school eco-councillors in representing their peers' views on environmental issues.¹²³ Personal development is supported through a comprehensive Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) programme, which introduces pupils to a wide range of communities and perspectives, teaching respect for differing views.¹²⁴ Lessons consistently link subject learning with SMSC, British values and the school's Islamic ethos, reinforcing the integration of academic and spiritual development.

London Islamic School (LIS)

Location: London

Established: 2000

Annual Fees: £4,320¹²⁵

Pupils: 135 (ages 11-16, boys-only)

Ofsted Success

Ofsted rated LIS as *outstanding* in behaviour and attitudes in 2024, and as *good* overall, following significant improvements since its last inspection.¹²⁶ Inspectors praised pupil behaviour as "exceptional," with high attendance rates as a result of the keenness with which pupils attend the school.¹²⁷

Academic Achievements

- Attainment 8 Score:¹²⁸ 58.6 (England average: 45.9)
- Grades 9-5 in English and Maths GCSE: 66.7% (England average: 45.2%)
- EBacc Average Point Score: 5.74 (England average: 4.08)

Values and Ethos

The aim of LIS is twofold: to produce the next generation of Islamic scholars, with a balanced education that enables them to be productive British citizens and contribute to a peaceful and tolerant society.¹²⁹ To achieve this, students receive a holistic Islamic education and learn about British values, visit the Houses of Parliament and frequent places of worship belonging to different faiths.¹³⁰

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Students are supported to build a strong understanding of their faith, morality and respectful social interactions.¹³¹ With the aim of fostering Islamic scholars, LIS has an Islamic curriculum that covers a wide range of subjects, including Arabic and Islamic history.¹³² The school has partnerships with external organisations that run activities for young people to expand the extra-curricular options for its students.¹³³ Students also learn about what it means to be an active contributor to a community through involvement in the student council, where students have a say in the affairs of the school.¹³⁴

Normanton House School

Location: Derby

Established: 2003

Annual Fees: £2,880 (Primary), £3,240 (Secondary)¹³⁵

Pupils: 145 (ages 5-16)

Ofsted Success

Normanton House achieved an *outstanding* rating in behaviour and attitudes in its 2024 Ofsted inspection and was rated *good* overall.¹³⁶ Inspectors highlighted that the “school is exceptional in promoting pupils’ attitudes to learning. All pupils are diligent and committed to producing their best work in lessons.”¹³⁷

Academic Achievements

Key Stage 2 SATs Results:¹³⁸

- Maths Pass Rate: 87% (national average: 73%).
- Reading Pass Rate: 93% (national average: 74%).
- Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar Pass Rate: 100% (national average: 72%).

GCSE Results:¹³⁹

- Attainment 8 Score: 50.3 (England average: 45.9)
- Grades 9-5 in English and Maths: 83.3% (England average: 45.2%)
- EBacc Average Point Score: 5.56 (England average: 4.08)

Values and Ethos

The school provides a caring and secure Islamic environment underpinned by discipline, respect and community engagement.¹⁴⁰ Pupils are encouraged to develop a strong Islamic character while reaching their spiritual, moral, social and academic potential. In today’s multicultural context, the school emphasises respect and tolerance. Lessons, assemblies and form-time discussions reinforce the importance of understanding other faiths and cultures.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Faith is central to the school’s ethos. Pupils participate in Qur’an recitation and daily prayers, and they have opportunities to join after-school Hifz (Qur’an memorisation) classes.¹⁴¹ The school’s values of “nurturing, honouring and serving” are consistently modelled by both staff and pupils.¹⁴² SMSC education is interwoven throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn about equality, diversity and British values, while also developing respect for those with different beliefs.¹⁴³ Community involvement is prioritised through charitable fundraising and volunteering, helping pupils connect their faith with wider social responsibility.

Endnotes

- 1** "Private School Fees Explained – What are You Paying for?," The Good Schools Guide," accessed 15 October, 2025, <https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/uk-schools/advice/private-school-fees-explained>.
- 2** Robert Long, Nerys Roberts and Alpesh Maisuria, *Faith Schools: FAQs* (House of Commons Library, 2024).
- 3** "Faith Schools in the UK," The Good Schools Guide, accessed 13 November, 2025, <https://www.goodschoolsguide.co.uk/uk-schools/advice/faith-schools-in-the-uk>.
- 4** "Main Findings: Non-Association Independent Schools Inspections and Outcomes in England: August 2025," GOV.UK, accessed 14 November, 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/non-association-independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-in-england-august-2025/main-findings-non-association-independent-schools-inspections-and-outcomes-in-england-august-2025#fn:5>.
- 5** Figure provided by Ashfaque Chowdhury.
- 6** According to the Independent Schools Council, 2,500 independent schools cater to 650,000 children (6% of all school children) in the UK. "Research", Independent Schools Council, accessed 14 November, 2025, <https://www.isc.co.uk/research/>.
- 7** Interview, Ashfaque Chowdhury.
- 8** "School Funding Statistics," GOV.UK, accessed 15 October, 2025, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics/2024-25>.
- 9** "School Funding Statistics," GOV.UK, accessed 15 October, 2025, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-funding-statistics/2024-25>.
- 10** This was calculated by adding all the average fees of the featured schools together (which can be found in Chart 1 and the Case Studies sections) and dividing by the number of schools.
- 11** "Admissions Policy," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 13 November, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Admissions-Policy.pdf>.
- "Admissions Policy," Al-Aqsa School, accessed 13 November, 2025, <https://www.alaqsaschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Admissions-Policy.pdf>.
- "Equality & Diversity Policy," Azhar Academy Girls School, accessed 13 November, 2025, <https://aags.azharacademy.org/old/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Equality-Diversity-Accessibility-Policy.pdf>.
- "Admissions Policy," Al Akram Trust, accessed 13 November, 2025, <https://alakramtrust.org.uk/normantonhouseschool/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Admissions-Policy-Document.pdf>.
- 12** Robert Long, Nerys Roberts and Alpesh Maisuria, *Faith Schools: FAQs* (House of Commons Library, 2024).
- 13** This score is calculated based on pupil achievement in 8 GCSE qualifications with double weighting for English and Maths. The highest Attainment 8 score of all schools in England is 87.2 and the lowest is 0 ("All Schools and Colleges in England," GOV.UK, accessed 5 November, 2025, <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools®ion=all-england&for=secondary>).
- 14** This score calculates a pupil's average grade across 6 GCSE qualifications, including English language and literature, Maths, a science qualification, history or geography and a language. The highest EBacc Average Point Score of all English schools is 8.65 and the lowest is 0 ("All Schools and Colleges in England," GOV.UK, accessed 5 November, 2025, <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools®ion=all-england&for=secondary&orderby=ks4.0.EBACCAPS&orderdir=asc>).
- 15** "All Schools and Colleges in England," GOV.UK, accessed 11 November, 2025, <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools®ion=all-england&for=secondary&schoollevel=IsSecondary&datasetfilter=final&hasperfddata=true&genderofentry=3%2c2&orderby=ks4.0.ATT8SCR&orderdir=asc&page=5>.

- 16** "All Schools and Colleges in England," GOV.UK, accessed 11 November, 2025, <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/schools-by-type?step=default&table=schools®ion=all-england&for=secondary&schoollevel=IsSecondary&datasetfilter=final&hasperfddata=true&genderof-entry=3%2c2&orderby=ks4.0.ATT8SCR&orderdir=asc&page=5>.
- 17** Sources for these figures can be found in the Case Studies section. These figures are subject to updates on an annual basis by the government.
- 18** "Key Stage 2 Attainment: National Headlines," GOV.UK, accessed 11 November, 2025, <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/key-stage-2-attainment-national-headlines/2024-25>.
- 19** The sources for these figures can be found in the Case Studies section below.
- 20** Data provided by the Association of Muslim Schools.
- 21** The number of students in each school is added up (618, 190, 168, 240, 313, 152, 366, 145, 118 and 135), making a total of 2,445. This is divided by the number of schools (10) to come to the mean of 244.5, which was rounded up to 245.
- 22** Independent Schools Council, ISC Census and Annual Report 2023 (2023), 9.
- 23** The sources for these figures can be found for each school in the Case Studies section.
- 24** Data provided by the Association of Muslim Schools.
- 25** Interview, Abdelhamid Chachi.
- 26** National Education Union, Independent Sector Teacher Pay Survey 2025 (2025), 6.
- 27** National Education Union, Independent Sector Teacher Pay Survey 2025 (2025), 11.
- 28** A survey of over 4,500 teachers and education leaders from 2023 found that 85% of respondents say they are underpaid, given their skills, qualifications and workload. 56% are either "very" or "extremely" worried about covering household bills. "Teachers feel severely underpaid", National Education Union, accessed 14 November 2025, <https://neu.org.uk/latest/press-releases/teachers-feel-severely-underpaid>.
- 29** Interview, Abdelhamid Chachi.
- 30** Interview, anonymous headteacher.
- 31** The total number of children at these schools is 2,445 and the cost per pupil for state-funded education is £8,210. Multiplying the two figures together equals £20,073,450.
- 32** The average cost of VAT on school fees per pupil per year for the 10 featured schools is £580.8, which was multiplied by the number of students at the featured schools (2,445), amounting to a figure of £1,420,056 for income for the government through fees VAT.
- 33** "Church Schools and Academies," The Church of England, accessed 16 October, 2025, <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies#na>.
- 34** "Collective Worship," The Church of England, accessed 16 October, 2025, <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/collective-worship>.
- 35** Larry Ferlazzo, "Students Benefit Academically When They Feel Understood," Education Weekly, 30 November, 2024, <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-students-benefit-academically-when-they-feel-understood/2023/11>.
- 36** Data provided by the Association of Muslim Schools.
- 37** "School Fees," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 23 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/school-fees/>.
- 38** "Inspection Reports," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/inspection-reports/>.
- 39** "Al-Ameen Primary School," Ofsted, accessed 11 November, 2025, <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/27130244>.
- 40** "Al-Ameen Primary School," Ofsted, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50145715>.
- 41** "Performance," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/performance/>.
- 42** "Performance," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/performance/>.

- 43** "Performance," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/performance/>.
- 44** "About Us," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/about-us/>.
- 45** "Collective Worship," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/collective-worship/>.
- 46** "Curriculum," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/curriculum/>.
- 47** "About Us," Al Ameen Primary School, accessed 21 October, 2025, <https://alameen.bham.sch.uk/about-us/>.
- 48** "Admissions & Fees," Al-Aqsa School, accessed 23 October, 2025, <https://www.alaqsaschool.co.uk/admissions-and-fees/>.
- 49** "Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271020>.
- 50** "Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271020>.
- 51** "Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271020>.
- 52** "Results," Al-Aqsa School, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://www.alaqsaschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/GCSE-SAT-Results-Summary.pdf>.
- 53** "Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," GOV.UK, accessed 23 October, 2025, <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/134809/al-aqsa-schools-trust/secondary>.
- 54** Interview, Abdelhamid Chachi.
- 55** "Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271020>.
- 56** Interview, Abdelhamid Chachi.
- 57** Interview, Abdelhamid Chachi.
- 58** Interview, Abdelhamid Chachi.
- 59** "Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271020>.
- 60** Interview, Abdelhamid Chachi.
- 61** "Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271020>.
- 62** "Inspection of Al-Aqsa Schools Trust," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50271020>.
- 63** "Our School Fees," Al-Ikhlaas Primary School, accessed 23 October, 2025, <https://www.al-ikhlaas.org.uk/fees>.
- 64** "Inspection of Al-Ikhlaas Primary School," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50173952>.
- 65** "Inspection of Al-Ikhlaas Primary School," Ofsted, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50173952>.
- 66** "SATs Results," Al-Ikhlaas Primary School, accessed 22 October, 2025, <https://www.al-ikhlaas.org.uk/sats>.
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About Equi

Equi is a pioneering think tank. An independent, non-partisan organisation whose mission is to develop and promote new public policy ideas for a just and prosperous society for all. Born from a recognition that British Muslims are not included in the crucial arena of public policy formation, it has been driven by a desire to contribute more fully to the health and wellbeing of the UK bringing into play the values and ethics of public service. Outcomes are driven by British Muslims, but not simply for British Muslims. We work in partnership with academics and other experts and conduct studies based on empirical research. Equi is committed to an evidence-based approach to policy development and retains copyright and full editorial control over all its research.