

Music, Chess and other Sins

Music, Chess and other Sins:
Segregation, Integration, and
Muslim Schools in Britain

Denis MacEoin

with the assistance of
Dominic Whiteman

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Author

Dr Denis MacEoin holds degrees from Trinity College, Dublin, Edinburgh University, and Cambridge (King's College). From 1979-80, he taught at Mohammed V University in Fez, Morocco, before taking up a post as lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Newcastle. In 1986, he was made Honorary Fellow in the Centre for Islamic and Middle East Studies at Durham University. He has published extensively on Islamic topics, contributing to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the *Oxford Encyclopaedia of Islam in the Modern World*, the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, the *Penguin Handbook of Living Religions*, journals, festschrifts, and books, and has himself written a number of books, including *The Sources for Babi History and Doctrine*, *Rituals in Babism and Baha'ism*, and *The Messiah of Shiraz: Studies in Early and Middle Babism*; he has also edited *Islam in the Modern World* with Ahmad al-Shahi. In 2007, he published *The Hijacking of British Islam*, a study of hate literature found in UK mosques. In 1992, HarperCollins published a volume of his journalism under the title *New Jerusalem: Islam, Religious Fundamentalism, and the Rushdie Affair*. He has written 25 novels and is translated into some 15 languages.

Foreword

Some Muslim schools in Britain have become part of a battleground for the heart and soul of Islam. Public debate tends to focus on the distinction between violent extremists and non-violent or 'moderate' Muslims, whereas there are a vast number of differences depending especially on country of origin. Any classification is in danger of over-simplification but for present purposes four groups are important: violent extremists; religious fundamentalists who are Koranic literalists but not violent; liberal Muslims who want to reform Islam to make it compatible with liberal-democracy; and secular Muslims who were born to Islam and maintain some links, perhaps out of respect for their parents, just as many British people put CofE on official forms but only rarely attend church. The schools that give cause for concern are being run by religious fundamentalists.

Their aim is to capture the next generation of Muslims for fundamentalism and to turn children away, not only from Western influence, but also from liberal and secular Muslims, whom they despise perhaps with greater vehemence than non-Muslims. Sometimes Muslim parents send their children to sectarian schools knowing what they are getting, but we suspect that some parents are simply dissatisfied with the low standards in the local state school and send their children to private Muslim schools only as an escape from the local authority. They may be getting more than they bargained for and find that their children are being taught to look upon their parents as 'partial' Muslims or

worse. This danger makes it all the more urgent to raise standards in our worst-performing state schools.

Our main concern is that some private Muslim schools are preparing children to live separate lives in Muslim enclaves and not to play their full part in the wider society to which they belong. We live in a liberal democracy committed to personal liberty, toleration, and equality under the law and good schools should encourage children to understand and uphold the essential features of such a society.

The approach of some of the Muslim schools we have studied is the result not of violent extremism but of religious fundamentalism. They see non-Muslim countries as part of the realm of unbelief and they see education as a process of inoculating children against infection by Western ideas. As far as possible they try to shield children from Western influence—hence the prohibition of art, music, and drama—but above all children are taught to reject the Western tradition of learning through discussion and argument. Fundamentalists see Islam as a world of faith. If you want to know the truth on some point, then consult the Koran or Islamic legal traditions. If children are given counter-arguments to Western ideas, it is typically not in a spirit of free inquiry, but rather to teach them the words they can use to resist Western influence. The liberal ideals of Milton and Locke, that we should learn to be self-critical and teach ourselves the disinterested pursuit of truth, are held in contempt.

Good schools should also try to pass on something of the taken-for-granted culture that makes Britain

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what it is. The characteristic values can't easily be itemised but would include respect for other people; good humoured argument with rivals; a sense of duty to ideals beyond exclusively private pleasures; a willingness to take personal responsibility; combining loyalty with a spirit of free inquiry; pursuing ideals without becoming a puritan; being aware of human imperfections and yet optimistic about the chances of working successfully together with friend and stranger alike; and a willingness to give people a second chance despite the danger of being taken for a ride by the unscrupulous. Attitudes such as these can't really be taught, but only absorbed by being practised, observed or read about, which means that familiarity with the historic literature of the British people is indispensable. Schools that tell their children that Shakespeare is a corrupting influence or that they should not read British newspapers are denying young people access to a rich culture of mutual respect.

There are three especially disturbing consequences of separatism. First, the children in these schools are not being prepared to be the successful citizens of a free society. Second, children who are taught to suspect and sometimes despise mainstream British culture will be more vulnerable to appeals from violent extremists. And third, the new sectarianism is undermining the religious toleration that has been the hallmark of this country for many years.

Our criticisms of sectarianism and its dangers are likely to be met with blank denial or the introduction of red herrings, particularly denying what is not being

asserted, namely that all Muslim schools are sectarian. Let me anticipate the latter line of criticism, by emphasising that the claims in this book are not about *all* Muslim schools but about *some* Muslim schools.

But how strong is the evidence? And what action does it justify? More specifically is it strong enough to justify closing some of the schools? In a few cases we suspect that it is, but natural justice demands the schools be given a chance to defend themselves and so the report calls for immediate, thorough and genuinely independent inspections to be carried out. As an earlier Civitas study argued, Ofsted has proved to be unsuited to its role, a conclusion reinforced by its failure to discover the failings in Haringey's social services that led to the tragedy of 'Baby P'. Under the wise chairmanship of Barry Sheerman, the House of Commons Select Committee on Children, Schools and Families has proved to be an effective organisation and an investigation carried out under its auspices would have the necessary independence.

This book is published as a companion to Professor David Conway's study of faith schools in general entitled, *Disunited Kingdom: How the Government's Community Cohesion Agenda Undermines British Identity and Nationhood*. He raises valid concerns about some Christian and Jewish schools. However, the problems are not as serious as in some of the Muslims schools we looked at and not on the same scale.

David G Green

Editor's Notes

Spellings of Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Bangla words. Although academics have well-established systems for transliterating words from Islamic languages, Muslims themselves, be they humble imams or ulama (clerics), tend to ignore these. The result is a dreadful mishmash of forms, so that the same name can end up with several spellings (Muhammad, Mohammad, Moham-med, Mohamad; Husayn, Husain, Huseyn, Hussein, Hussain; Darul Uloom, Dar al-'Ulum etc). This is compounded by the fact that many schools display a less than perfect knowledge of Arabic, which is further compounded by bad English. It would be tempting to impose a single system on all this, but that would interfere badly with the identification of a specific school, individual, or organisation. What remains is unsatisfactory, but at least it preserves what needs to be preserved.

Denis MacEoin

Summary

There are some 166 Muslim schools in the United Kingdom, including 24 Saudi schools about which little is known and about 26 Darul Ulooms, religious seminaries which straddle secondary and further education.

Nearly half of British Muslims polled by ICM in 2004 expressed a wish to have their children educated at Muslim-only schools.¹ Overall, 45 per cent chose a Muslim school, as against 44 per cent who opted for a state school. However, this figure went up significantly for under-34 respondents, 50 per cent of whom preferred Muslim schools, compared with 40 per cent who expressed a preference for state schools. In that same poll, the proportion of respondents who thought Muslims had integrated too much had increased from 17 per cent in 2002 to 26 per cent (and 29 per cent for under-34s) two years later.² In 2006, Jon Snow carried out a broad survey of Muslims for a Channel 4 documentary. He found a rising desire for segregation, especially among young people. Writing about this, he said 'today's young British Muslims are less liberal and more devout than their parents. Their beliefs render many of them determined not just to be different but also to be separate from the rest of the nation. The issues that bring them into direct conflict with Britain as a whole include freedom of speech and how the "war on terror" is being fought at home.'³

In other words, the option for separate schools seems to be related to a growing desire for separate-

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ness in general. This has a frightening logic: as more Muslim children attend Muslim schools (especially schools of an anti-integrationist character), each new generation will demand greater and greater exclusion from mainstream society.

Some of the schools we have studied in preparing this report have connections or a direct affiliation with fundamentalism. Some have strong links, others weaker, and many schools show no clear sign of such connections at all (though there is evidence of a pro-integration policy in only a few cases). If these links to fundamentalism increase, the consequences may be dire. Muslims, remaining aloof from everyday British life, may be suspected of involvement in extremism and be maligned for their negative attitudes towards the majority of the population, the kuffar. Many perfectly innocent Muslims could find themselves caught up in the fallout from demands for parallel lives by the imams and elders who seek to control their community by pressing believers in a fundamentalist direction. Non-Muslims at large, finding Muslims hard to understand already, will only recoil further from a community so determined to shut them out

As quotations throughout this report will show, many of the individuals and organizations associated with Muslim schools harbour beliefs that must be repugnant both to moderate Muslims and to the rest of the public. About 25 of the schools we have studied are Darul Ulooms, a species of seminary imported from India and Pakistan, whose curriculum is based on a seventeenth-century teaching system called the Dars-e

Nizami. Very few if any secular subjects are taught in these institutions, and their aim is not to prepare pupils for life in the wider world, but to give them the tools for a more limited existence inside the Muslim enclaves.

In September 2008, Professor David Canter, director of the Centre for Investigative Psychology at Liverpool University, reported on a study he had carried out in India, where he interviewed 49 convicted Islamist terrorists. Among his comments were several addressing the issue of faith schools: '... issues like faith schools are terribly dangerous. Setting up these divisions based on faith and religion is the starting-point for people thinking of themselves as separate and distinct and part of some out-group.'⁴

We realized from the outset that we would not be able to obtain textbooks of our choice or spend time as observers in classrooms. First, there was the sheer scale of what observation would entail, secondly the fact that, as with Ofsted inspections, schools would be on their best behaviour during visits. That was not, we believed, the best methodology for getting more in-depth information, including information on the schools' connections.

We chose to work mainly through the Internet, forging links and drawing threads together. School websites were, as often as not, our starting-points, alongside the websites of the mosques by which or in which schools were run, or the trusts who ran them. In order to build pictures of schools, we used a combination of texts and images such as photographs of

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girls wearing hijab of varying fullness or school buildings and interiors.

We have kept a careful record in screen shots and in original hard copy of the links we have found between schools and fundamentalism. These show creation dates and prove the records' existence. This should provide verifiable evidence that our accounts are accurate, even if links are taken off websites or entire websites disconnected from the web when this report is published.

We have drawn attention, without criticism, to the shortcomings of some Ofsted reports. This is done in a spirit of cooperation, and in recognition of the difficulties schools like these present for the uninitiated inspector.

Our modest proposals follow here. They start from the simple assumption that something has gone wrong and that it must be put right.

Recommendations

There must be an overall emphasis at all levels that British/Western culture should take precedence over other cultures in the UK, just as various styles of Islamic culture take precedence in Muslim countries, Chinese culture in China, or African culture in Africa. This preference must take place without racist or other discriminatory overtones.

1. Where extremist views give rise to intolerance towards non-Muslims, anti-Semitism, a phobia of non-Muslim society, discriminatory attitudes

towards women, bigotry towards homosexuals, a horror of men and women mixing, a belief in the legitimacy of jihad, a hatred of all unbelievers, a belief that Western civilization is utterly corrupt and must be replaced by some form of Islamic super-state, a contempt for sports, music, dance, cinema, television, art, or any other views likely to destabilize society or compromise social cohesion, it must be asked whether radical groups of any kind, in Islam or other faiths, are suitable to found, manage or teach in schools. This has particular relevance to groups such as the Salafis, the Wahhabis, the Deobandis, the Tablighi Jamaat, or the Jamaat-i Islami. We recommend that close scrutiny be given to all schools with these and similar connections, and that common sense should prevail. We do not knowingly let racists run schools in England or religious bigots run them in Northern Ireland, and the same should apply to groups holding views like those listed above. Just as non-Muslim schools work hard to train children to be non-judgemental, to treat others fairly and without prejudice, so those Muslim schools that espouse fundamentalism or allow themselves to be linked to it must be re-educated and brought in line with educational norms. Where schools refuse to dissociate themselves from these views, they should be closed. It is hard to imagine a middle path. In 2006, the then Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly, proposed the closure of schools that sought to change British society to fit Islamic

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values. 'They should be shut down,' she said. 'Different institutions are open to abuse and where we find abuse we have got to stamp it out and prevent that happening'.⁵ In the light of our findings, it would seem rational to resurrect Kelly's proposal. All Muslim children will be given a full education, but in the same schools, state and private, where the majority of young Muslims are currently educated, and where they will be protected from separatism, bigotry, and religious extremism.

2. A sufficient number of Ofsted inspectors, non-Muslims and identifiably moderate Muslims, must be trained properly in all relevant aspects of Islam, so they can identify suspect lessons or connections.
3. Ofsted must consider how to tackle the problem of how to inspect Urdu-speaking, Arabic-speaking, or Bengali-speaking schools without depending exclusively on Muslim inspectors. Transparency is vital.
4. The DCSF must enter into dialogue on the educational value of a heavy emphasis on teaching languages like Urdu and Arabic, rather than spending more time on English or important European languages. Most Muslim children will have only a limited use for these languages for most of their lives, if they are to remain in the UK and take part in broader society. Training in Arabic leading to GCSE or A-levels is a valid undertaking,

given the importance of Arabic as an international language, but the amount of time spent on Qur'anic and related Arabic can be of only limited value, since it is not planned to turn all schoolchildren into religious scholars. There are numerous translations of the Qur'an, some of high quality, and an increasing body of translations of Hadith and other religious literature in print and online; these are surely adequate for those who do not want to make Islamic Studies their specialism. From a religious point of view too, they may offer a preferable route to understanding of scripture, not least because Arabic is a difficult language by any comparison. Modern Standard Arabic, which is the basis for all contemporary literature, journalism, and international trade, is the better option for pupils seeking a place in the modern world. It should not be forgotten that we live much closer to Europe than to South Asia, so the teaching of European foreign languages must continue to have priority, given their role in Western literature, cinema, political discourse, journalism and trade. Languages like Spanish, Portuguese, and French give students access to many countries outside Europe and are considerably more useful than Urdu or Bengali. Turkish would be worth considering, since it will grow greatly in importance as an official Islamic language if Turkey is admitted to the EU.

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5. The use of hijab for schoolgirls carries negative significance, as is clear from many of the websites accessed from schools in which women are condemned to a subservient existence mediated by the wearing of the veil. Putting girls of four and upwards into almost full hijab (covering everything except hands and face) amounts to treating them as potential objects of sexual desire before puberty, with persistent negative effects on self-image. When it is combined with total segregation of the sexes, it makes it next to impossible for young Muslim women to function within anything but a segregated society, where they will never be treated as the equals of men. Every year, an incalculable number of Muslim teenagers and young women are lost to the wider world that informs their citizenship. Western school uniforms for girls are perfectly modest and make it much easier for Muslim girls and young women to socialize with non-Muslims and integrate with British society. If an outright ban on the wearing of hijab seems politically sensitive, the problem should be tackled in a different way. However, the French example should be considered.
6. Muslim schools must not be permitted to remain aloof from regular contact with non-Muslim schools and their pupils. Without such contact in sports, debates, charity events, concerts and all the other activities that make up so much of the fabric of a school's life, young Muslims will remain

excluded from the life of a British child and will grow up excluded from the lives of British adults. Schools that refuse such contact must be considered antipathetic to non-Muslim life and can scarcely expect to avail themselves of the benefits British society offers them.

7. Imams and preachers currently associated with schools as principals, sponsors, trustees etc. must be vetted for fundamentalist tendencies. If the views they hold are opposed to the basic values of British society, their role in schools must be restricted or terminated. If someone is incapable in conscience of teaching loyalty to Britain and love for the majority of its citizens, their competence as educationalists must be called in question.

Introduction

The debate about faith schools¹ runs along two irreconcilable lines. Critics condemn them as socially divisive, and cite—with much plausibility—Northern Ireland, where even 40 years of the Troubles and ongoing sectarian violence have failed to bring people to their senses or persuaded clergy and politicians to agree that divided schools foster a divided community. But perhaps Northern Ireland is a special case.

Their supporters argue that religious schools offer children an alternative to the moral and lifestyle challenges of secular schooling, particularly in areas like discipline, sex, drugs, drinking, and consumer culture. They argue—again with much plausibility—that the education they offer will protect their pupils from the ills of society at large through their teenage years and into adulthood. But their detractors will point out that only a minority of secularly-educated young people go on to lead disordered lives, and that they benefit from full inclusion in modern society.

It is hard to deny either of these propositions, and easy to see their flaws. The Northern Irish situation is unique to that region and Catholic and secular or Anglican schools in the rest of the UK (with some exceptions for Scotland) do not seem to create lasting divisions for society at large as their students enter the adult population.

Over the years, government policy towards faith schools has shifted. In the 1960s, it was assimilationist, only to move in the 1970s to integration, then

multiculturalism. In the Blair years, multiculturalism came to be interpreted in a divisive way, and faith schools have been increasingly supported by the government, despite clear antipathy on the part of the public and education professionals.

In 2001, a YouGov/Observer poll established that 80 per cent of respondents were against a White Paper proposal to increase the number of faith schools.² A Guardian/ICM poll conducted in 2005 concluded that two-thirds of respondents (64 per cent) believed that government should not fund faith schools at all.³ Yet in 2007, the Children's Minister Ed Balls promised money to allow yet more religious schools to enter the state sector. His decision was immediately criticized. Dr Evan Harris, the Liberal Democrat MP who has campaigned against faith schools, said: "'Faith schools" admissions and employment policies are divisive and discriminatory. They penalise good teachers on the basis of their private beliefs and separate out children along religious lines. That is as unacceptable as racial discrimination and segregation and the last thing this country needs.'⁴

Fears about faith schools were expressed in January 2008 by Barry Sheerman, chairman of the Commons children, schools, and families select committee:

Faith schools are an important area of concern. This is something the government should look at in a focused way, rather than drifting into the proliferation of faith education... I am getting reports from people in local government who find it difficult to know what is going on in some faith schools - particularly Muslim schools... Will we find out that

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young people in certain kinds of faith school, and particularly young women, are not getting the provision or education that they deserve?⁵

Teachers in particular have expressed doubts about these schools. The 2006 Headspace survey of head-teachers revealed that of 801 heads questioned 47 per cent felt there should be fewer or no faith schools, while only 32 per cent felt there should be no change, and a tiny nine per cent were in favour of the government's policy to expand the number of faith schools.⁶ Similarly, of those questioned, only a quarter believed that faith schools create greater religious tolerance, 18 per cent thought they made no difference, and a full 45 per cent insisted that they actively contribute to less tolerance.⁷ More directly, Keith Porteous Wood of the National Secular Society had no reservations about saying that 'the more the government seeks to promote diversity through faith schools, the more divided society has become'.⁸

Are Muslim schools a special case?

Muslim schools have come in for particular criticism. In 2004, following the publication of *Muslims on Education*,⁹ a report written by Muslim educationalists, in which an expansion of Islamic schools is called for, the National Union of Teachers opposed such a move, arguing that 'introducing more faith schools would be an 'admission of [the] failure' of schools to meet the needs of Muslim pupils'.¹⁰ In this same context, a select committee from the Office of the Deputy Prime

Minister argued that “‘ignorance and fear of other cultures” was pushing parents to schools where they would mingle almost exclusively with pupils from the same racial background.’¹¹ John Dunford, general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association added: ‘To create a stable multi-cultural society we need successful multi-cultural schools and not a proliferation of single-faith schools.’¹²

In the following year, David Bell, the chief inspector of schools, angered Muslims when he accused many Islamic schools of undermining the coherence of British society. Speaking at a conference on citizenship, he said: ‘I worry that many young people are being educated in faith-based schools with little appreciation of their wider responsibilities and obligations to British society’.¹³ More recently, the National Union of Teachers proposed a scheme that tried to have the best of both worlds, calling for the abolition of faith schools while recommending increased religious input to schools in general.¹⁴ This compromise—which encourages visits from religious representatives without showing schools how to differentiate between moderates and extremists—is likely to fail, since it barely addresses the demands from both sides of the debate.

In general, the NUT remains uneasy, not just with faith schools, but with anything that may constitute a risk of indoctrinating their pupils with beliefs. Mick Brookes, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, has argued that ‘there’s a big difference between learning about religion and promoting

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religiosity; the latter shouldn't be part of the education system'.¹⁵

In recent years, traditional faith schools (including 49 Jewish schools)¹⁶ have been joined by several others representing a range of faiths: two Sikh, one Greek Orthodox, one Seventh Day Adventist, one Hindu and—in the planning stages—one Buddhist school.¹⁷ There are also—since the 1990s—38 schools operated by the Exclusive Brethren¹⁸ and supervised by their own educational Board, the Focus Learning Trust. In 2005, these schools were given a positive report by Ofsted.¹⁹

These are hugely overshadowed by a rapidly growing sector of Muslim institutions. These now number 127 full-time schools and an estimated 700 part-time madrasas for intense religious instruction, which pupils attend in the evenings and at weekends. There are also growing numbers of Darul Ulooms and other seminaries, which train boys (and, in some cases, girls) to become religious scholars.²⁰

Muslim schools (and madrasas in particular) have suffered from the insistence on the part of large sectors of the Muslim community to recreate in the UK the style and content of schooling that can be found in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.²¹ According to Sahib Mustaqim Bleher: 'immigrant Muslims arrived with the intention to improve their social and economic situation through a temporary stay in an alien environment; their favourite response to educational problems—if taken seriously at all—was to insist on the preservation of traditions brought with them from

“back home”. Such a short-term and backward-looking approach was harmful more than helpful.’²²

Muslims in the school system

in the UK.²³ A footnote in the 2005 Open Society Institute study, *British Muslims and Education*, indicates that the age profile of Muslims is much younger than for any other religious group: ‘In all, 33.8 per cent of Muslims fall into the 0-15 age bracket, and a further 18.2 per cent are between 16 and 24 years old. (See: Scott *et al*, *Ethnic Populations*). Assuming that 75 per cent of children in the 0-15 age bracket attend school, and 80 per cent of young people in the 16-18 age bracket are in school, the number of Muslims attending school in the UK is between 482,477 (if the total Muslim population is 1.6 million) and 542,786 (if the total population is 1.8 million). The Office of National Statistics (ONS) gives the figure of 371,000 Muslim children in England of compulsory schooling age, i.e. 5-16 year-olds.²⁴ The higher figure in the present [i.e. Open Society] report includes all the children who attend school outside the compulsory period of schooling, especially 4-5 year-olds and 16-18 year-olds, as well as Muslim children in the rest of the UK, and an estimate of the increase between 2001 and 2004.’

In 2005, a census of schools revealed that only 1,770 of these children attended maintained Muslims schools.²⁵ The vast majority—about 96 per cent—were and are in non-religious state schools.²⁶ But since 1997, the number of independent Muslim schools has been

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growing rapidly. Muslim teachers and educationalists of all hues have sprung up to meet this evident demand for non-secular education, and hardline and extremist individuals and organizations have moved in to maximize the advantages that a fundamentalist curriculum in a strictly Islamic environment offers them.

It is difficult to estimate how many Muslim schools there are in Britain. The earliest British Muslim school was the London School of Islamics, founded by Iftikhar Ahmad in 1981. It was not until January 1998 that Islamia Primary school in Brent and Al-Furqan Primary in Sparkhill became the first state-funded Muslim schools. According to a report in 2006, there were then 140 Muslim schools.²⁷ But a BBC estimate in 2007 made this 126 full-time schools (115 independent, eight state-funded, and three approved for state funding).²⁸

A list drawn up by the authors of this report contains a total of 166 schools. That figure comprises 114 'regular' schools (state and private), 26 Darul Ulooms, and 24 Saudi-financed schools. It is highly likely that, as this report goes to press, one or more additional schools will have opened. The vast majority of schools are situated in England, and are concentrated in areas with large Muslim populations.

It has also been estimated that there are over 700 madrasas in the UK.²⁹ The Muslim Parliament has called for these to be registered by the government, within a context of claims that sexual abuse occurs within some, that half of Britain's madrasas use

corporal punishment, and that registration may help reduce this.³⁰ However, the figure of 700 is in itself questionable. Exactly the same figure is given for madrasas in Hyderabad, India;³¹ northern Bangladesh;³² and Syria,³³ which suggests that references to '700 madrasas' may be formulaic.

The UK madrasas we refer to are not the sort of religious seminary to which the word is applied throughout the Islamic world. The nearest equivalents to the classical madrasa in the UK are the Darul Uloom institutions, which we have listed separately. The madrasas are evening and weekend classes intended to provide Muslim children with additional teaching in the Qur'an (mainly memorization of the text without understanding) and related Islamic topics, including some instruction in Arabic. These madrasas are almost invisible. Some appear in our list, where they are connected to schools. The vast majority are informal, unregistered and unpoliced by Ofsted.³⁴

Darul Ulooms³⁵ and madrasas suffer from many failings, in most cases attributable to their dogged pursuit of seriously outdated curricula. This is summed up vividly by Muslim educationalist Professor Syed Sajjad Husain:

The traditional schools (or *madrasahs*³⁶ as they are called) serve as theological seminaries and follow syllabuses that have remained unreformed for centuries. They teach no new subjects, eschew science and modern philosophy and are centred on Islamic religious texts, the *Qur'an* and the *Ahadith*,³⁷ turning out graduates who find it difficult to adapt to modern institutions.³⁸

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Most Muslim schools are inspected by Ofsted at reasonable intervals.³⁹ It is not our intention to do what Ofsted has already done, nor would it be within our resources to do so. Our remit has simply been to assess schools and those individuals and organisations linked to them in various ways in order to identify which ones seem most likely to be resistant to or even set hard against the principle of social cohesion. It is irrelevant to our purpose whether a school is a 'good' school, a 'satisfactory' school or a 'failing' school. We congratulate achievement and encourage schools to go on to do better. What we do not know is exactly what is taught in any of these schools. Given so many of their associations, it is tempting to believe that what is taught in the privacy of the school may not be the same as what is presented for the benefit of non-Muslim outsiders (including Ofsted inspectors). And, judging by some glowing Ofsted reports given to schools with dubious connections, it is clear that many inspectors do not, understandably, know what to look for or what questions to ask.

Focus

It has been our intention to confine our research to issues that have a bearing on social cohesion, on the ability of Muslim children (and the adults they grow into) to become integrated individuals within the broad church of British society as a whole, and on their capacity to exploit their minds and talents to the full.

It is not within our competence to comment on the academic achievements of any one school. Readers must consult online records of GCSE and A-level results, of value-added outcomes, of comparisons between schools and the local and national averages. More broadly, they should look at the comments in the Ofsted reports to which we refer.

It is often claimed that some Muslim schools have better academic achievements than most state schools, and that this relates to the ethos, discipline, and specific faith characteristics of each establishment. We do not deny that some Muslim schools perform very well indeed,⁴⁰ but we are not convinced that this is true beyond a small number. Our scepticism is backed up by the following remarks from the [Fourth Report of the Select Committee on Education and Skills](#), published in 2003.

66. The second motivating force, the belief that faith schools obtain higher standards, is more problematic. Evidence from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) suggests that not only is the performance premium for faith schools not significant, but that it may be derived from a combination of school practices, for example entering all pupils for an additional GCSE. According to NFER, this undermines the notion that the faith formula, more widely applied, would give rise to improved attainment. Dr Sandie Schagen, Principal Research Officer at the National Foundation for Educational Research told us:

‘On the basis of our research, looking exclusively at achievement, there is not any evidence at all to suggest really that increasing the number of faith schools will improve the level of achievement... Our finding is that basically, when

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you apply value-added analysis, that advantage all but disappears, which suggests that the difference is based on intake. Interestingly, you can hypothesise that if they do have better ethos and better behaviour and so on that would lead to better achievement, but we did not find any evidence that that is so.'

The only lengthy study of academic achievement in faith schools is a 2002 study by four researchers, carried out for the National Foundation for Educational Research.⁴¹ The study is based on four types of faith school: Roman Catholic, Church of England, other Christian, and Jewish, but is mainly a study of the first two. It shows that there is slightly above-average attainment for faith schools, but where there is below-average performance, results are exactly the same as in non-religious schools. The above-average achievements are only marginally above those of secular schools. One possible explanation for better performance at GCSE is that faith schools may add extra subjects. Other explanations relating to the school ethos or the presence of a supportive community have been advanced as well.

It is not clear whether Muslim schools match the characteristics of other faith schools, but it is probably reasonable to assume they do. More research has to be done to determine how far Muslim schools fit the pattern of Christian and Jewish schools, and whether the negative factors we have identified above bring their average achievement down.

This is as far as we would like to take this aspect of the faith school/Muslim school debate in respect of

academic performance. We would not want this to distract readers unduly from the main topic under discussion, which is the separatism which so many of these schools manifestly inculcate. Superficialities like what sort of headscarf should be worn by girls or whether or not it is permitted to play chess have been allowed to camouflage much greater dissonance between Muslim schools and society at large.

1

Moderates and Extremists

It is common to speak of a dichotomy between 'radical/extremist' and 'moderate' Muslims, and the British government has, indeed, often spoken about a need for dialogue with the latter. But no one has yet ventured a well-honed definition of 'moderate' when applied to Muslims and the Islamic faith.¹ In some senses, moderation must be defined in negative terms: moderate Muslims are those who eschew terrorism, military jihad and the excessive and often violent control of women; and who avoid Salafi, Wahhabi, and other extremist preachers and texts.

But there is much to be said for a more nuanced definition, one that emphasizes the positive. By this definition, a moderate Muslim would be one who considers and practises his or her faith in personal, spiritual, and sometimes mystical rather than political forms. Such a Muslim would be one who takes his religion seriously, but does not see it as a hindrance to full integration into British and Western society and culture. Integration is paramount if present divisions are not to harden into impermeable walls. A willingness, even an eagerness, to integrate with one's fellow citizens has to be the *sine qua non* of all successful moderation.

Moderate Muslim women are emancipated. Moral, ethical, pious, but at the same time educated, in

employment, and with a range of friends, from other Muslims to Christians, Jews, Hindus and atheists. All of these are normative in modern Britain, and all are conducive to a proper degree of well-being that defines the individual through a love of community, of place and of culture.

Moderate Muslims are, according to their taste, as able as any of their fellow citizens to appreciate and take part in music, art, dance, theatre, film, television and literature. They see the police and the security services, not as foes, but as agencies for the protection of law-abiding citizens. They may deplore much about Western society, from sexual excess to drug-taking to gun crime—as do most of us—but they find much to praise, from democracy, civil liberties, free speech and human rights to anti-discrimination laws and the generally high levels of toleration in society at large—things that are absent in almost all Muslim societies.

This is a portrait that may be added to at will. It is easy to see how genuinely moderate Muslims will win the respect and admiration of the majority of their fellow citizens, how they will be able to play an active role in British life, defying calls to ‘hate the kuffar’ or exhortations to treat the UK as ‘an enemy of Islam’. They will join the police force, the army, the navy and the RAF, and they will put their lives on the line for their country like those with whom they serve. For that they will earn the thanks of the British people, unlike those radical Muslims who call for and support a terrorist jihad on UK soil, or who openly despise every single feature of our common culture.

Moderation like this confers benefits on everyone, not least children and young people, whose lives can be lived to the full as equal partners in the country they inhabit. Here, the role of Muslim schools comes fully into play, if they can act as transmitters of moderation, integration and mutual tolerance. In a balanced school, one that does not take instruction from hardline preachers² or fundamentalist institutions, pupils will enjoy the same opportunities as Christian, Jewish or atheist children, and will grow to become citizens of a country that values difference yet demands likeness in its core values.

Significantly, it has to be noted that there is no reason to believe—as many Islamic leaders would like us to—that all believers are committed to having their children schooled in Muslim schools. ‘Some advocates of faith-based education cite the numbers of a particular faith group in an area as evidence of demand for faith schools. Yet some parents believe that they can provide the elements of faith-based learning for their children and are strong advocates of multi-faith and multicultural schools, believing such schools will best equip their children for living together with others in a diverse society and that the disadvantages of faith-based schools outweigh their advantages. This viewpoint can be found across all faith groups.’³

Lack of moderation

For the outsider, Islam is hard to get a grip on. It’s easy to imagine that, because there are divisions within the

religion, these must roughly correspond to Christian churches (Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and so on) or Jewish movements (Hasidic, Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Liberal and so on). Although Islam has many sects (famously, but inaccurately, 72 in all), a visitor who turns up at a mosque will not be told 'this is a Salafi/Wahhabi/Ikhwani/Deobandi or other mosque', nor will there be a sign suggesting the orientation. A little questioning may reveal that the mosque is indeed controlled by one or another faction, or that it is dominated by a particular ethnic or national group; but it would be difficult for the outsider to guess some of these identities without help. Insiders, of course, know exactly what orientation each mosque in their neighbourhood will follow.

Most of the time, when one goes onto a Muslim website, there may be no obvious clue as to its orientation. Again, a little knowledge will pay off, but many websites go to some trouble to identify themselves as 'Muslim' only, making it hard to classify them. Similarly, most Muslim schools go to great lengths in order to avoid categorizing themselves as one denomination or another, even though this can have a considerable bearing on what sort of Islam is taught and what sort of links the school may have to outside organizations and individuals. We shall see later that Ofsted inspectors appear to be either ignorant of or indifferent to the allegiance of schools, with the result that glowing reports have been given for schools deeply associated with fundamentalist beliefs.

Distinctions have to be made, however fuzzy they may seem. At the far end of the Islamic spectrum are extremist groups who believe it appropriate to fight jihad against unbelievers, using terrorism in the absence of the armies of a Muslim state (the traditional approach). There are numerous such groupings around the world: al-Qa'ida, Hamas, Hizbullah, Islamic Jihad, India's Lashkar-e Taiba, the Taliban and many smaller groups.

It is highly probable that some older pupils are radicalized during their school years; but there is no evidence to suggest that this is done with the connivance of the schools or school staff.⁴ How such radicalization takes place would be material for a different report. The work of groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Jamaat-i Islami in recruiting youngsters to a more politicized style of Islam (thus serving at times as stepping-stones to more extreme interpretations of the faith) is well known, but largely irrelevant to schools.

Nonetheless, it is clear that even quite young Muslim children are being alerted to political issues much earlier than their non-Muslim peers. According to Muslim sociologist Aminul Hoque, speaking in a 2005 BBC [radio interview](#) with Frank Gardner.⁵

HOQUE: And one other thing I want to say, Frank, is if you were to go on a Sunday afternoon to a typical Muslim household over lunch—whether that be a halal turkey or halal roast lamb or just rice and curry—and just observe the conversation

amongst the family, young children as young as eleven, twelve, thirteen – yes, they know who David Beckham is, yes they know Britney Spears and they're talking about the latest mobile phones and latest trainers. They understand all of that, but at the same time you'd hear them talking about the Palestinian issue, you'd hear them talking about, did you hear how many died in Iraq last week? Did you read the headlines?

GARDNER: Which you would never get a twelve or thirteen year old Western white kid in Britain saying.

HOQUE: Of course and therein lies the difference. These young people, they're deeply politicised. They're personalising an issue which is essentially thousands of miles away. They feel affected.

Many schools display some degree of affiliation with hardline puritan and separationist movements. The most important of these in the UK are the Wahhabis, the Salafis, the Deobandis, and, to some extent, the Muslim Brotherhood. The Deobandis control almost half of all mosques in the UK. Referring to the original Deobandi seminary, the Darul Uloom, Deoband, which sends imams and preachers to this country, and which has set up numerous British teaching institutions, Salman Rushdie has written: 'It teaches the most fundamentalist, narrow, puritan, rigid, oppressive version of Islam that exists anywhere in the world today.'⁶

Wahhabism is the official creed of Saudi Arabia, and has been carried around the globe through massive Saudi investment in the propagation of their strictly puritan form of Islam. Much money has gone into posts at Western universities, mainly to fund centres for the study of Islam, usually in a non-objective fashion,⁷ and a proportion of this has come from Saudi sources. Wahhabism, which is chiefly concentrated in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, is an extremist form of the faith that is widely condemned as heretical by a majority of Muslims. Saudi/Wahhabi attitudes are well exemplified by two statements by eminent modern clerics. In 2008, the President of the Saudi Shura Council, Dr Salih Humaid, 'denied that there is something called "tolerant Islam," insisting that "Islam is Islam"'.⁸ One of the country's most prominent religious authorities, Shaykh Salih ibn Fawzan ibn 'Abd Allah al-Fawzan, has openly stated that 'anyone who claims that he is a liberal Muslim is in a state of contradiction, and must repent to God to be a Muslim in fact'.⁹

There are 24 Saudi schools in the UK, from Exeter to Dundee, ranging from primaries to first- and second-year secondaries. On more than one occasion, in the UK, the United States, and elsewhere, these schools have come in for sustained criticism after the discovery of racist and hate material in their textbooks.¹⁰ That criticism has been renewed as recently as July 2008, when an update to earlier reports was published showing that, despite loud protestations to the

contrary, Saudi textbooks are still deeply offensive to most people.¹¹

Social Cohesion

In recent years, social cohesion has become a central issue in British political and social life. More specifically, the debate about Islam in Britain has increasingly been framed in social cohesion terms. Across the country there has been growing unease over the viability of a society in which citizens live parallel lives and deny themselves any sense of a common destiny or purpose. In 2005, Trevor Phillips, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, articulated a sentiment many of his fellow citizens already harboured: 'the aftermath of 7/7,' he said, 'forces us to assess where we are. And here is where I think we are: we are sleepwalking our way to segregation. We are becoming strangers to each other, and we are leaving communities to be marooned outside the mainstream.'¹ In the same year, Coventry University established its [Institute for Community Cohesion](#), and in 2006, the government set up the [Commission on Integration and Cohesion](#).²

In its final report, [Our Shared Future](#) (June 2007),³ the Commission included an annex⁴ in which it set out recommendations for the introduction of curricular and extra-curricular activities to promote social cohesion within schools. In the same month, the DfES published its own document, [Guidance on the Duty to Promote Community Cohesion](#), in which a similar

philosophy for all schools was set out. From September 2007, it became a duty for schools to promote social cohesion as a priority. The guidance included one sentence in which the entire duty was summarized: ‘...the main focus of the duty is cohesion across different cultures, ethnic, religious or non-religious and socio-economic groups’ (p. 5).

The role of citizenship education as a means to achieve both an understanding of diversity and a focus for cohesion was emphasized in a 2006 document published by the schools’ inspectorate, Ofsted, *Towards Consensus: Citizenship in Secondary Schools*. Here, a subtle difference is identified between good behaviour and learning active citizenship skills:

Exponents of citizenship education refer to citizenship as ‘a subject but also more than a subject’. The problem in some schools is that they only have the ‘more than’, with citizenship almost invisible in the curriculum itself. Particularly in the early days of citizenship as a new subject, many headteachers claimed their ethos as a main plank of their citizenship provision. Especially in faith schools, they cited the ethical and moral values of their pupils as evidence of effective provision. In these schools, headteachers may well point to the demeanour of their pupils as good citizens in a general sense, and to all the parts of their school’s work that contribute to this; but they have missed the point that National Curriculum citizenship is now a subject that is taught, learned, assessed and practised.’ (pp. 10-11)

In the following year, the DfES issued its *Diversity and Citizenship Curriculum Review*, authored by Sir Keith Ajegbo, Dr Dina Kiwan and Seema Sharma. This document sets out its vision as follows: ‘In five years,

for all schools to be actively engaged in nurturing in pupils the skills to participate in an active and inclusive democracy, appreciating and understanding difference' (p. 3). It emphasizes the responsibility of schools in achieving this: 'All schools... are responsible for equipping [their] pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds' (p. 2), an intention that clearly excludes monocultural schools. The main themes here are citizenship, identity and an appreciation of diversity, but social cohesion is part of the overall structure:

The changing nature of the UK and potential for tension to arise now makes it ever more pressing for us to work towards community cohesion, fostering mutual understanding within schools so that valuing difference and understanding what binds us together become part of the way pupils think and behave.

These initiatives were not knee-jerk responses to the 7 July 2005 bombings in London. Prior to that, in 2001, following the race riots in Burnley, Bradford and Oldham,⁵ the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, established a Community Cohesion Review Team, chaired by Ted Cante, a former Chief Executive of Nottingham City Council and Under Secretary of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. The team's report, *Community Cohesion*, warned that some ethnic groups were leading 'parallel lives'. Some of its conclusions are worth quoting:

5.1.16 It is unfashionable to speak of loving one's neighbour, but unless our society can move at least to a position where we can respect our neighbours as fellow human beings, we

shall fail in our attempts to create a harmonious society in which conditions have changed so radically in the last 40 years. Such respect depends, in part at least, on being open with one another about differences of belief, tradition and culture. In our anxiety to eliminate the forms of insulting behaviour and language, we have created a situation in which most people are now unwilling to open any subject which might possibly lead to uncomfortable differences of opinion. In this lies a big danger. If neighbours are unable to discuss differences, they have no hope of understanding them. Those who wish to cause trouble then have a fruitful field in which to operate. The recommendations in our report seek to create conditions in which all of us can engage in open debate on issues which affect us all and when, as is inevitable, disagreements become plain there will then be a real chance that they can be accepted with mutual respect.

Important as these various reports and reviews are, they say very little about the dangers of segregation along faith lines. Citizenship and social cohesion are seen mainly as issues concerning race, ethnicity, culture, or language. But in the case of many Muslim schools, extreme commitment to an identity imposed by faith (and associated cultural values) casts a heavy cloud over relations with the community of the *kuffar*—the unbelievers—and seems in some cases to prevent any meaningful relationship from developing at all—not unlike the case of the Exclusive Brethren schools mentioned above. Children brought up through a sequence of fundamentalist and monocultural primary and secondary schools are almost guaranteed not to possess the attitudes and skills necessary to an integrated life. In other cases, a simple distance from

wider society may give way to a positive hatred for all things associated with the world of non-belief.

Speaking at a Muslim Educational conference in 2002, Dr Musharraf Hussain⁶ stated that: 'The *raison d'être* of Muslim schools is vigorously stated by its founders as follows: to prevent the assimilation of the new generation'.⁷ His solution is to Islamize the National Curriculum. He is not the only one to envisage such an outcome.

Whereas the Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and other minority religious communities present few issues overall for social cohesion, or do so only in the case of more fundamentalist groups, it is already clear that many sections of the Muslim community have become ghettoized and are alienated from mainstream society. The belief that it is wrong for Muslims to integrate with non-Muslim society is something propagated by leading fundamentalist shaykhs, such as Shaykh Anwar al-Awlaki,⁸ as expressed here in poor English in an online interview:

ISLAM FOCUS RADIO: another question here from Dublin: salam, would you discuss thoughts on integration and Muslims in west? basically give your thoughts on integration or Muslims in west society.

SHAYKH ANWAR AWLAKI: [There can be] no integration between Islam and the kuffar [unbelievers]. The Prophet and his companions faced trials in Mecca, but did not integrate. Islam is Islam, disbelief is disbelief. Muslims need to call others to become Muslim, when Muslim part of ummah [the international community of Islam], same rights and

responsibility. Integration in the sense that the barrier between Islam and disbelief is torn down is impossible.⁹

The same sentiments can be found on the [as-Sabiqoon forum](#) associated with the [Azhar Academy](#), a London school:

Integration [sic]. It's a famous word. What does it really mean?? I recently came across a few things that provoked me to start off this topic. Why are the non-Muslims in this country who run government, the media and many other public bodies always going on about how Muslims need to intergrate?

What do they mean by intergration? I personally think they mean that they want us to strip ourselves of every connection and association we have with the Qur'an and Sunnah [Prophetic traditions], and be just like them. So they want us to get drunk and not wash our backsides when we go to the toilet.¹⁰

According to Magnus Ranstorp, director of the Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at St Andrews University, 'home-grown terrorism is certainly being accelerated by the growing "ghettoification"'. Not just in Britain, but across Europe.¹¹ In the UK, ghettos have become most visible in eight major cities. The most seriously affected are Manchester, Birmingham and Bradford, in all of which there are large numbers of Muslim schools. According to a report delivered to the Royal Geographical Society in 2005, the process of integration is so slow that in many cases it will never happen.¹² The report was based on a three-author study published in 2002. This study, carried out across 18 British cities, revealed that

the number of Pakistanis in segregated communities in Bradford and Oldham had trebled during the previous ten years. Members of the Bengali community in London increasingly live in isolated and socially excluded enclaves (though this is not true in Manchester or Birmingham). It was argued that inhabiting these segregated communities could be classed as living in a ghetto.¹³

Ali Noorizade of the Arab-Iranian Studies Centre describes mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi enclaves that are self-sufficient and whose inhabitants 'don't show any intention to integrate with the [mainstream] society'. He adds that women in particular 'are totally isolated', something that we will see as a major problem for schools in which any form of mixing of the sexes is prohibited, and where girls are taught to adopt traditional roles.¹⁴

There also appears to be a large 'digital ghetto', where Asian Muslims watch Pakistani and other satellite TV channels in preference to mainstream UK programmes.¹⁵ How far this exerts an influence on the younger generation it is hard to say, but it is clear that there are numerous Islamic websites that cater for Muslim youth, some of which are available through school websites.¹⁶

Since the presence of ghettos is in direct contradiction to political moves towards social cohesion, both Labour and Conservative MPs have vowed to break up Muslim ghettos.¹⁷ So far, however, there seems to have been very little success in loosening the grip ghetto

culture has on its members or in dispersing the ghettos themselves.

Ghettoization is, as this report will show, most clearly evident where it should be almost unknown, namely in a sizeable proportion of Muslim schools.

This is by no means a problem for all Muslims, but it is, in varying degrees, an issue for growing numbers of religious groups and individuals. Although Muslims have lived in this country for some time,¹⁸ the past ten years have seen a rapid growth of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi populations. This growth has largely been within poor and uneducated sectors, who have increased the need for ghetto areas and the concentration of Muslims living in them. According to Dr. David Owen, a population studies academic at the University of Warwick, a proportion of new immigrants belong to the Deobandi strain of Islam, a hugely influential movement which is opposed to mixing with the members of other faiths.¹⁹

If Muslims find it hard to integrate, and if a proportion of them reject integration as such and see it as a challenge to their religio-cultural identities, then the wisdom of teaching Muslim children separately from their peers must be called into question, much as we may query the advisability of educating Catholic and Protestant pupils apart in Northern Ireland or Ultra-Orthodox Jews in Stamford Hill or Gateshead or Exclusive Brethren elsewhere.

Plenty of Muslim children attend secular state schools and private schools in tandem with Jews, Sikhs, Hindus, and atheists, and come to no harm as a

result.²⁰ Their chances for integration are greatly enhanced. But the mere act of attending a secular (or, for that matter, Catholic or Anglican or Jewish) school renders such children and their parents suspect in the eyes of the more ardent proponents of Muslim separatism, for whom the world of the *kuffar* or unbelievers is entirely inimical to Islam in all its aspects.

This separatism is based on a traditional concept known in Arabic as *al-wala' wa'l-bara'*—loyalty (to Muslims) and separation (from non-Muslims), and even 'enmity' towards them in some translations. This doctrine is endemic to a range of Muslim groups of a stricter style, some of whom run or are linked to Islamic schools in the UK.

The question is probably academic. No one can deny the right of Muslims to educate children in their own fashion—not, at least, until government policy shifts against the very concept of faith schools. Whether the right to separate education takes priority over an impetus towards social cohesion is an issue that future governments will have to tackle. It will involve a major re-appraisal of multiculturalism and the impact it has had on ghettoization and a debate about key issues such as national identity, citizenship, loyalty or religious identity in a secular society. This has been artificially framed as a conservative against liberal debate, something that has made it more difficult to engage in than necessary. In fact, social cohesion is as intimately linked to liberal concepts such as tolerance, democracy, and minority pride as it is to

traditionally conservative motifs like patriotism, civility, or loyalty to the Crown.

There is, however, one important argument against separate Muslim schooling. Whereas the Exclusive Brethren keep themselves apart from the rest of society and require segregated schools in order to bring up their children in that ethos, they are small in numbers and do not represent any sort of threat to this country. The Muslim situation is different. A recent estimate puts the Muslim population of the UK at two million and growing,²¹ with a percentage of that community representing a potential threat to the UK—and a threat to the majority of British Muslims. Islamic separatism, particularly where it is allied to religious extremism, could have consequences far greater than any posed by the exclusivity of a small body such as the Exclusive Brethren.

In the meantime, we are obliged to examine just how many Muslim schools may be changing the balance between integration and social fragmentation in the UK. In so doing, it is not our purpose to enter into a debate about Islam as a religion, or about the undoubtedly loyal, peaceful, and law-abiding percentage of Muslim citizens of this country. A majority (96 per cent) of Britain's 400,000 Muslim children receive their education in state schools,²² where they learn to be part of wider society. But increasing numbers are finding their way into private and state-funded Muslim-only schools, places to which few if any non-Muslims would send their own children. If government plans go ahead, then more of

these schools will be financed in order to join the state sector while remaining separatist Muslim institutions.²³ It has been argued by some Muslim educationalists that state schools with a majority-Muslim intake should be turned into Islamic schools. The impetus for the building and expansion of many of these schools comes from individuals and groups who seek to create distinctly Muslim personalities and to form children who learn to reject Western values, children who will grow up and leave school, not to join mainstream British society, but to remain within a community (or a community within a community) that stands apart from the life of the vast majority of UK citizens and, as often as not, sidelined from the lives of their fellow Muslims.

When a fatwa bank linked from a school²⁴ tells a boy that dreaming of [playing cricket for Pakistan](#) is forbidden because it is a sacrilegious waste of time, or stipulates that [reading Harry Potter books](#) is prohibited; or another²⁵ argues that pupils must not read ‘[shameless novels](#) and fiction books’, that Ludo, Monopoly, draughts and chess are forbidden because ‘[the Holy Prophet... stated the person who plays chess, is like the one who dips his hands in the blood of a swine \(pig\)](#)’, and condemns ‘[the evil system of the Western culture](#)’; or when [a site run by an educational institution](#)²⁶ writes an article (among many) stating: ‘We find that the whole world is obsessed with the kufr [unbelieving] idea of freedom, i.e. freedom of speech, freedom of movement, etc. In modern schools and universities, we observe independence, free expression

and secular thinking being encouraged. This idea of freedom, “It’s my life, I’ll do what I want” is a predominant, underlying theme of today’s music. It is being used as a means for drilling those modern ideologies that are totally contrary to Islamic Shariah and values, into the minds of Muslims. One should abstain from evil audacities such as listening to music; and when a graduate of the last institution speaks of the ‘evils of music’, calls the Royal College of Music ‘satanic’, and claims that music is the way in which Jews spread ‘[the Satanic web](#)’²⁷ to corrupt young Muslims—how are we to respond? Do we just take this on the chin and praise Islamic cultural variance?

Again, it is not our purpose here to repine against young boys and girls being given a clear understanding of their identities against a background of morality, principle and religion. Our concern lies, rather, with a range of behaviours and doctrines that do not seem to play a healthy role in preparing young people for life in the fullness of British society and culture. These children live in a Western society, and denying them a full and emotionally fulfilled participation in it is to hold them back from what is in fact their birthright.

It means that no child attending an all-Muslim school of this nature will ever visit an art gallery, attend a concert of classical or non-classical music, experience the transcendence of listening to a great operatic tenor perform, pass an evening mesmerized by a production of *Romeo and Juliet*, performed by the National Ballet. Nor will a gifted Muslim girl become a

ballerina or a boy dream of conducting an orchestra. These are all matters of great weight. They represent some of the greatest achievements of Western civilization. To deny young Muslims access to the finest things in our culture, for what are the most puritanical of reasons, is to undermine the very foundation on which our education system is built. It must be reasonable to secure for children a rich engagement with Western culture so that they can become real citizens and not just visitors who do not speak our cultural language.

What is more, children from the most hardline schools will never even grow to appreciate Islamic music like Qawwali, a religious form popular across Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and other countries of the region from which most of these children or their parents come. They will never listen to the sublime devotional music of the [Sabri Brothers](#), [Nosrat Fath 'Ali Khan](#), or [Aziz Mian](#). An entire heritage may be squandered because some puritans can see only one style of devotion.

When Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh, and other children become musicians and artists and authors and dancers and chess players, when they acquire the skills to live normal, fulfilled lives in this country or in any other Western democracy, it says nothing positive about those Muslim schools that deny their charges those very things that give transcendence to us all.

For a school of all places to impose such policies for doctrinal reasons seems wholly contradictory to the purposes of education as practised in the West. And

contrary to the best values of a society that values individual freedom, toleration, and fairness. Many Muslims came to these shores in order to find better lives for themselves and their children. Those better lives should be construed not only in terms of material benefits, but in the freedom Britain offers from the harsh traditionalism that smothers the lives of so many still in Pakistan or Bangladesh. If many Muslim schools have as their aim the reinforcement of that conservatism and even its intensification through adherence to increasingly fundamentalist schools of Islamic or Islamist thought, it is hard to see the wisdom, if there be any at all, of persevering with a system that allows young Muslims to be acculturated, not by the society they were born into, but by an extreme form of the culture and religion of their parents and grandparents.²⁸

Metaphorically, Muslim fundamentalists and puritans are killing off the brightest and best of each coming generation. Is it surprising that younger Muslims have more extreme views than their parents and grandparents? There are so few ways for them to shine. If literature, art, dance, drama, and music are closed off, where do the most talented young Muslims go in order to achieve the things that so many young Jews and Christians take for granted?

Muslim failure in science

Do they go into the sciences? Many do, but they do so in a context of overall Muslim failure in the field. A

Muslim scientist, Professor Pervez Hoodbhoy, of the Quaid-i-Azam University²⁹ in Islamabad, Pakistan, has looked closely at the achievement of Islamic countries in the sciences and found them to lag far behind the rest of the world. He begins by pointing out a simple yet important fact:

No major invention or discovery has emerged from the Muslim world for well over seven centuries now. That arrested scientific development is one important element—although by no means the only one—that contributes to the present marginalization of Muslims and a growing sense of injustice and victimhood.³⁰

In a compelling and insightful article, he examines the roots of the modern problem through four 'metrics': the quantity of scientific output; the role played by science and technology in national economies; the extent and quality of higher education; and the degree to which science is present or absent in popular culture.

He cites a study (again by Muslims) from the International Islamic University in Malaysia that shows that Muslim countries³¹ have a mere 8.5 scientists, engineers, and technicians per 1,000 population, compared with a world average of 40.7 and 139.3 for countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Forty-six Muslim countries together contributed 1.17 per cent of the world's science literature, yet 1.66 per cent came from India and 1.48 per cent from Spain alone. Of the 28 lowest producers of scientific articles in 2003, half belonged to the Organization of the Islamic

Conference.³² By another measure, he points out that his own country, Pakistan, has produced a mere eight patents in 43 years.

Table 2.1

The seven most scientifically productive Islamic countries as of early 2007, compared against a selection of other countries

	Physics papers	Physics citations	All science papers	All science citations
Malaysia	690	1,685	11,287	40,925
Pakistan	846	2,952	7,934	26,958
Saudi Arabia	836	2,220	14,538	49,654
Morocco	1,518	5,332	9,979	35,011
Iran	2,408	9,385	25,400	76,467
Egypt	3,064	11,211	26,276	90,056
Turkey	5,036	21,798	88,438	299,808
Brazil	18,571	104,245	128,687	642,745
India	26,241	136,993	202,727	793,946
China	75,318	298,227	431,859	1,637,287
USA	201,062	2,332,789	2,732,816	35,678,385

Source: These data are from the Philadelphia-based science information specialist Thomson Scientific

Among the reasons Hoodbhoy cites for this remarkable lack of scientific development is the rise of religious fundamentalism, referring to attitudes identical to many outlined in these pages. In a lengthy passage, he articulates this problem as follows:

SOCIAL COHESION

Academic and cultural freedoms on campuses are highly restricted in most Muslim countries. At Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, where I teach, the constraints are similar to those existing in most other Pakistani public-sector institutions. This university serves the typical middle-class Pakistani student and, according to the survey referred to earlier, ranks number two among OIC universities. Here, as in other Pakistani public universities, films, drama, and music are frowned on, and sometimes even physical attacks by student vigilantes who believe that such pursuits violate Islamic norms take place. The campus has three mosques with a fourth one planned, but no bookstore. No Pakistani university, including QAU, allowed Abdus Salam to set foot on its campus, although he had received the Nobel Prize in 1979 for his role in formulating the standard model of particle physics. The Ahmedi sect to which he belonged, and which had earlier been considered to be Muslim, was officially declared heretical in 1974 by the Pakistani government.

As intolerance and militancy sweep across the Muslim world, personal and academic freedoms diminish with the rising pressure to conform. In Pakistani universities, the veil is now ubiquitous, and the last few unveiled women students are under intense pressure to cover up. The head of the government-funded mosque-cum-seminary [figure 4] in the heart of Islamabad, the nation's capital, issued the following chilling warning to my university's female students and faculty on his FM radio channel on 12 April 2007:

'The government should abolish co-education. Quaid-i-Azam University has become a brothel. Its female professors and students roam in objectionable dresses... Sportswomen are spreading nudity. I warn the sportswomen of Islamabad to stop participating in sports... Our female students have not issued the threat of throwing acid on the uncovered faces

of women. However, such a threat could be used for creating the fear of Islam among sinful women. There is no harm in it. There are far more horrible punishments in the hereafter for such women.'

The imposition of the veil makes a difference. My colleagues and I share a common observation that over time most students—particularly veiled females—have largely lapsed into becoming silent note-takers, are increasingly timid, and are less inclined to ask questions or take part in discussions. This lack of self-expression and confidence leads to most Pakistani university students, including those in their mid- or late-twenties, referring to themselves as boys and girls rather than as men and women.³³

In March 2007 students of a seminary, Jamia Hafsa, in Islamabad, demonstrated for the enforcement of Islamic law. The seminary's head, a government employee, issued a threat to all female students in Islamabad to be similarly veiled or else face consequences.

Hoodbhoy goes on to interrogate a number of popular myths that purport to explain this Islamic syndrome of scientific backwardness. His own explanation leads us back to the issue of religious fundamentalism:

Science is fundamentally an idea-system that has grown around a sort of skeleton wire frame—the scientific method. The deliberately cultivated scientific habit of mind is mandatory for successful work in all science and related fields where critical judgment is essential. Scientific progress constantly demands that facts and hypotheses be checked and rechecked, and is unmindful of authority. But there lies the problem: the scientific method is alien to traditional,

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unreformed religious thought. Only the exceptional individual is able to exercise such a mindset in a society in which absolute authority comes from above, questions are asked only with difficulty, the penalties for disbelief are severe, the intellect is denigrated, and a certainty exists that all answers are already known and must only be discovered.

Science finds every soil barren in which miracles are taken literally and seriously and revelation is considered to provide authentic knowledge of the physical world. If the scientific method is trashed, no amount of resources or loud declarations of intent to develop science can compensate. In those circumstances, scientific research becomes, at best, a kind of cataloging or 'butterfly-collecting' activity. It cannot be a creative process of genuine inquiry in which bold hypotheses are made and checked.³⁴

Finally, he argues that a scientific renaissance is possible within Islam, on certain conditions:

Science can prosper among Muslims once again, but only with a willingness to accept certain basic philosophical and attitudinal changes—a Weltanschauung that shrugs off the dead hand of tradition, rejects fatalism and absolute belief in authority, accepts the legitimacy of temporal laws, values intellectual rigor and scientific honesty, and respects cultural and personal freedoms. The struggle to usher in science will have to go side-by-side with a much wider campaign to elbow out rigid orthodoxy and bring in modern thought, arts, philosophy, democracy, and pluralism.³⁵

We have quoted Hoodbhoy at length here, for the high quality of his arguments, for the fact that he is a Muslim living and teaching in an Islamic country (and a country deeply relevant to the mood and texture of British Islam), and because the insights he delivers are

as relevant to the primary and secondary levels of education as to the tertiary.

Internationally, Muslim achievement in academia in general is poor. Not one university from a Muslim country, rich or poor, appears in the annual [QS World University Rankings list](#) of the top 200 universities.³⁶ It cannot be argued that this is because most Muslim countries belong to the developing world. There are universities in the top 200 from only partly developed nations: South Korea (2), Israel (3), India (2), Taiwan, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Thailand, Greece, South Africa, or small countries like Ireland (2), Italy, Belgium (5), and the Netherlands (6). Some Muslim countries are endowed with vast wealth and could easily compete with nations like Italy or Argentina. Clearly, something else is holding them back.

Certainly, there are already signs of poor attainment for Muslims as a group within the UK. According to the Office for National Statistics, thirty-three percent of Muslims of working age have no qualifications at all: the highest figure for any religious group in the UK. This is echoed by the Muslim Council of Britain: 'Some sections of the Muslim community do achieve high academic success but a significant number of Muslim pupils' specifically from, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Turkish and Somali backgrounds are among those who experience the highest levels of academic underachievement and consequent lack of qualifications in Britain.'³⁷

In Britain Muslims are the least likely (12 per cent) to have degrees and similar qualifications.³⁸ While

much of this can be put down to the presence here of older generations of Muslims who received little or no education in their place of birth, that seems to be an insufficient reason for these figures. Muslims between 16 and 24 have the highest unemployment rates in Britain: 13 per cent in 2004. For 16- to 30-year-olds holding degrees, the difference between British born and born abroad was not great. The rate for Muslim women was 18 per cent, four times as high as the figure for Christian and Jewish women. It is worth adding that the same statistics base shows Jews to be the most likely (44 per cent) to have degrees.³⁹ If we consider that Jews are the best-integrated non-Christian religious group in the country, it is arguable that assimilation plays a role in upward mobility, and that segregation does the opposite.

Men and women of working age from the Muslim faith are also more likely than other groups in Great Britain to be economically inactive, that is, not available for work and/or not actively seeking work. Reasons include being a student, being disabled or looking after the family and home.

Among working age men, Muslims had the highest overall levels of economic inactivity in 2004 – 31 per cent compared with 16 per cent of Christians. This is partly explained by the young age profile of Muslims and the correspondingly high proportion of students. However, among older men of working age, Muslims also tended to have the highest levels of economic inactivity, largely due to ill health.

Within each religious group women were more likely than men to be economically inactive. The main reason was that they were looking after the family and home. Muslim women were more likely than other women to be

economically inactive. About seven in ten (69 per cent) Muslim women of working age were economically inactive, compared with no more than four in ten women of working age in each of the other groups. Christian women were least likely to be economically inactive (25 per cent).⁴⁰

In June 2008, Dr Farhan Nizami, Director of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, spoke out about the failure of many Muslims to integrate, linking this to low educational levels. He said that 'Muslims would never play a full role in British society until they improved their education, language and aspirations'.

He warned that those who feel marginalised are most easily influenced by the rhetoric of extremism, and called on Muslim parents to do more to avert the danger of their children becoming fanatics. 'Muslim families have to realise the importance of education for their children and make an effort to push them into achieving more,' Dr Nizami said.⁴¹

The visible fundamentalism and hyper-orthodoxy we have detected in so many schools is a crushing weight on their young Muslim students, whether they wish to excel in the arts, the social sciences, or the sciences. To anyone who has not broken free of such psychological constraints, it is not just the material sciences that present a problem. Someone trained to think in terms of transmitted texts, authorities, memorization, copying, the unquestioning absorption of strictly controlled information and all the rest simply cannot study history, sociology, anthropology, women's studies, religious studies, philosophy, literature, art history, Islamic Studies (in its rigorous Western form) or anything else that calls for

questioning, challenging of authority, independent reasoning, and so forth. Prohibitions derived from undiluted obscurantism and denials of rationality, the critical spirit, and the importance of empiricism are deeply destructive of any meaningful education of Muslim children and young people.

Another factor of relevance here is the impact on schoolchildren of a rigorously applied religious regime. Children attending fundamentalist schools and coming from religious families face demands on their time and energy that are not present for their secular counterparts. Once mature, they will be expected to pray five times a day, rising early in the summer to perform the dawn prayers. Once a year, they will have to fast during the month of Ramadan, which may fall at crucial times of the year, occasionally during exams.⁴² Beyond that, many pupils will be required to attend madrasas in the evening or at weekends, and there are many other part-time classes for Qur'an memorization and recitation, as well as other activities associated with the local mosque.

The Muslim Educational Trust (MET), writing in 2001, has expressed concern about the underachievement of Muslim children in Britain, but rather than seeing the problem in the sort of fundamentalist teaching so many young Muslims are subjected to, they argue that pupils suffer because insufficient attention is paid to their religion, that there is a 'lack of consideration for their religious background'.⁴³ We would prefer to agree with Hoodbhoy in his assessment that archaic forms of religious belief and

observance are the primary factors harming the development of young Muslims internationally.

It is significant that the whole of the MET's eight-page document concerns itself much less with the educational needs of Muslim children than with the religious needs of children and teachers, as if these and these alone were stages on the road to success. The UK remains tolerant of the many religions that have found a home here; it is Muslim educationalists, flying in the face of so much evidence from the Islamic world, who insist on prioritizing religious learning and making provision for a religious lifestyle above the many other things that guarantee educational success.

Such restrictions can have only one effect: to trap British Muslims into a cycle of regression that will hold back all those who are educated within such an educationally impoverished system. No doubt children taught in so many Muslim schools will grow up to be obedient devotees of a narrow expression of the much greater Islamic spirit; but they will be deficient in all those things that are needed if Islam in Britain is to thrive and if Muslim individuals are to be the creative and talented people they have a potential to be. There is nothing to prevent Muslims from achieving great things in this country, were it not for the unimaginative, irrational, and bigoted ideologies that have permeated so large a part of the Islamic educational system.

If religious fundamentalism has blighted the development of Muslim countries at the university level, how much more has that been the truth in

primary and secondary schools. It is the duty of the British government and the British educational system to ensure that Muslim children are better served than this, and that a romantic image of happy communities lovingly tended by men in beards is replaced by a cold, hard appraisal of what is actually going on in British schools. A fresh, far less compliant approach will benefit everyone, from the host society to future generations of young Muslims who will be taught, not to turn their backs on the values of this country, but to embrace them along with a healthy and positive set of Islamic values.⁴⁴

The Muslim Curriculum and the National Curriculum

Many Muslims have integrated well into British society. For others, as we have already seen, integration is regarded as an evil that must be resisted in themselves and for their children. This issue is at its most acute when it comes to the upbringing of children and what they are taught in school, where pressure to remain separate from mainstream society will be hardest to resist. In this way, new generations of Muslims may be created, who are in but not of the society around them.¹

In 2002, Iftikhar Ahmad, founder of the first Muslim school in the UK,² claimed that 'the needs of Muslim children can be met only through Muslim schools'.³ This was an extraordinary statement. It meant that British schools were incapable of teaching Muslim children or inculcating in them basic moral values that could be supplemented by parents or after-school classes. Allowed to run to its logical conclusion, Muslims would from the earliest age be subjected to a self-imposed apartheid that would condemn them to parallel lives. But his views are far from uncommon.

In its crucial 2007 document, *Meeting the Needs of Muslim Pupils in State Schools: Information and Guidance for Schools*,⁴ the Muslim Council of Britain articulated

several areas where Muslim pupils have to be separated from their non-Muslim fellows. Although there has always been a right for parents to withdraw their children from acts of collective worship, the MCB's insistence that Muslim children must not take part in any but Muslim worship (p. 44) denies them the opportunity—which so many other children take advantage of—to share a religious experience with the rest of their school. But the self-seclusion impinges on so much of the curriculum that it places enormous restrictions on young Muslims and their ability to be part of the schools to which they belong. The activities and lessons from which the MCB wants the right to withdraw Muslim pupils include: mixed swimming (p. 38); dance (p. 39); sex and relationship education (p. 47); music (p. 52); drama (p. 53); figurative drawing (p. 53). On farm visits, touching or feeding pigs is prohibited (p. 56),⁵ and staff are warned that pupils and parents may refuse to shake hands with a member of the opposite sex at prize-giving ceremonies (p. 58).

To achieve this, many Muslim educationalists and those responsible for what is taught in Muslim schools have put forward ideas about how to promote a curriculum consonant with Muslim demands, and how to Islamize existing curricula. This is a conscious process that threatens to derail the very notion of a shifting but fairly uniform body of knowledge that is passed on to each new generation.

In the case of a prohibition on sex education, the consequences may be severe. It may be argued that young Muslims often marry earlier and, willingly or

not, observe a stricter moral code than non-Muslims, and that they do not, therefore, need sex education. This ignores the fact that Muslim girls do have boyfriends and do get pregnant, and that the consequences for such activities may be very severe indeed. Many Muslim women have been killed for even minor infractions of that moral code.⁶ Such 'punishments' are not Islamic, but they do occur disproportionately within sections of the Muslim community. More information, not less, will surely make it easier for Muslim teenagers and young adults to straddle the challenges of living between two worlds. Given that several fatwa banks we have accessed through school websites provide extremely explicit sexual advice for adults, introducing sex education to Muslim schools should not be as hard as it seems.

The following passage from the website Mufti Says provides a disturbing insight into how some Muslims look on sex education:

'SEX EDUCATION' - AN EFFECTIVE TOOL OF THE WEST FOR THE PROMOTION OF DEBASED SEXUAL VALUES: The West is making a vigorous effort to promote their libertine culture and values upon the nations of the world. To this end, they are employing all the resources available at their disposal. One such powerful medium is education, via the Western, secular educational system. In order to promote it's [sic] liberal culture on sex, the West introduced the concept of sex 'education' (Corruption) as an important element of the educational curriculum. Through this, it hopes to imbue the coming generations with its corrupt values on sex from a very tender age. Corrupt and perverted

values on sex are being foisted onto the minds of the unwary victims in the name of sex 'education'. Young, impressionable minds are being slowly corrupted with debased Western sexual values at secular institutions under the guise of 'education'. Tangible examples of such degenerate sexual values is encouragement towards sexual 'experimentation' in the form of masturbation, dating, viewing pornographic material, premarital sex, depraved sexual acts and practices and casting aside modesty and natural inhibitions. These are the anti-thesis of all that which [Islam](#) stands for. The danger this poses to the Muslims, especially the [Muslim](#) youth, is indescribable, as it shakes the very foundations of their faith, their morality and their value systems. Yet many parents and concerned citizens of society are blissfully unaware of the magnitude of the problem. If this trend continues unchecked, the tidal wave of depravity will certainly destroy the morality of the Islamic society. Every member of society has to play a meaningful role in stanching [sic] this rot and decay that is sure to devastate our present and coming generations.⁷

One matter that gives cause for concern in this area is the presence on so many fatwa⁸ sites of sexually explicit and sometimes bizarre material. More than one Islamic school provides entry to a fatwa bank, and it must be assumed that fairly young children, though denied well-proportioned sex education lessons, will have access to texts that many adults in the West would find embarrassing in the context of a public forum. There are questions about telephone sex with one's spouse, about touching one's wife's private parts through trousers when she has a period in order to masturbate her, the permissibility or impermissibility of vibrators, whether it is allowed to drink one's wife's

milk, and much else. Schools that have been careless about allowing links to such material on their school websites have surely behaved with a lack of proper care.

The curriculum

In 2002, a group of Muslim educationalists, under the auspices of the Association of Muslim Social Scientists UK, participated in a conference entitled the *Muslim Education in Europe Conference*. The attendees included several from the UK, such as Dr Musharraf Hussain, Dr Imran Alawiye,⁹ Dr Nasim Butt¹⁰ and Akram Khan-Cheema.¹¹

Musharraf Hussain was outspoken in his attitude towards the curriculum. We have already seen how he defines the purpose of Muslim schools: ‘The *raison d’être* of Muslim schools is vigorously stated by its founders as follows: to prevent the assimilation of the new generation.’ He continued: ‘The question arises as to how Muslim schools can achieve this aim if they are delivering the same National Curriculum (which is secular) as any other state school.’ He then discussed approaches being used to achieve this aim: ‘Firstly, by creating an Islamic ethos in the school so that the National Curriculum is firmly embedded in an Islamic milieu, and secondly by Islamizing the contents of the National Curriculum.’ (p. 36)

Islamizing the National Curriculum is also an aim of the Nida Trust, a Muslim charity that has considerable influence on Muslim schools in the UK.

Islamizing the curriculum is one of the objectives of its [General Teachers Training Programmes](#).

One example of how this may be done is given in a workshop on music at the Muslim Education in Europe Conference, where it is suggested that 'Muslim schools can actually fulfil the criteria of the National Curriculum for Music through enhanced Islamic Studies/Arabic/Qur'an.'

But it will manifestly do nothing of the sort. The conference echoes the view of the MCB that several mainstream subjects like the visual arts, dance, and theatre are considered unsuitable, and we have seen elsewhere (as we will find on several school websites) the view that literature (including Shakespeare) is dangerous territory. The consequences of this approach are abysmal.

One of the conference participants begged this question when he wrote 'the next generation [of Muslims] should feel as European as the original citizens. Their contribution should be the gift of the Spirit of Islam to Europe.' (p. 28) That Muslims should contribute is unquestionable; but if they have no grasp of European culture, how on earth can they make that contribution? If they live mentally in other countries and other times, what have they to act as a spring for their own emergence as masters of their own destiny in a world that has given them a new home? Is Islam to be tacked on to Europe in a blind and unfeeling manner?

Some schools spell this out quite clearly. The Tawhid Boys' School of North London expresses a

desire to keep the curriculum 'within the bounds of Shari'a [Islamic jurisprudent]'. Their website states: 'Here we have a great opportunity. To present an alternative to the prevalent and dominant waves of Western Art and values that has (sic) enveloped our attitude to this subject.'

Or again: 'Art is not for art's sake; practicality and educational usefulness must be the main objective.'¹² It is hard to imagine anything more Gradgrindish in intent or more anti-educational in practice. How can Muslims contribute—as we wish they would—when they will not engage?

On the website of the Madani Secondary Girls' School, East London, we read: 'Our children are exposed to a culture [i.e. British culture] that is in opposition with almost everything Islam stands for.' This is a bruising comment that indicates what a negative picture of Western life and civilization will be imparted to pupils. To see everything Western as the clear opposite of all one is taught to believe to be right has the potential to damage young minds for life. This should be taken seriously in the light of the 7/7 bombings, where hatred of what non-Muslims stand for was adduced as an excuse for massacre. We do not say that schools teach terror, but we do ask if they do not make some of their pupils likely to fall prey to even greater extremism. If all that is Islamic is right and lovely, and all that is non-Muslim is corrupt and evil, how might an impressionable mind understand his or her role in British life?

At the Muslim Education in Europe conference, Dr Abdulhamid Abusulayman¹³ made it clear that there were no parts of the curriculum that should remain free of Islamization. He ‘suggests the necessity of reclaiming the *Tawhidi*¹⁴ Qur’anic worldview and applying it to the development of all educational policies, materials and practices’ (p. 27). He was followed by Dr Yousef Amirian, who argued that educators should come from the very same cultural background as their students (p. 28). As we shall see, many Muslim schools in this country try to recreate the milieu of South Asia, creating a closed environment which means children will live in a surrogate Pakistan or Bangladesh at home and school, even though they actually live in Bradford or Birmingham.

Like Abusulayman, Rosnani Hashim, a teacher at the International Islamic University, Malaysia, stresses the Tawhidi approach in direct opposition to Western educational values: ‘Knowledge, subject matters, or courses offered in the curriculum must be free from secular and Westernized elements that are alien to Islam. These elements—dualism, humanism, secularism, and tragedy—which are peculiarly Western and anti-Islamic, must be isolated from our curriculum, then replaced with the Islamic worldview of tawhid (Oneness of Allah).’¹⁵

We have previously mentioned the Community Cohesion Review Team report, published in 2001. Entitled *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, the report looked for the roots of inter-

community rioting and sought ways to improve matters. At one point, the team observed that:

In terms of community cohesion... a significant problem is posed by existing and future mono-cultural schools, which can add significantly to the separation of communities described above. The development of more faith-based schools may, in some cases, lead to an increase in mono-cultural schools but this problem is not in any way confined to them.¹⁶

The Muslim response to this is contained in a 2004 publication by four Islamic bodies, led by the Association of Muslim Social Scientists. *Muslims on Education: A Position Paper* is a short document that seeks to cover some general issues concerning Muslim education. Citing the Community Cohesion report, the paper argues against it, saying that:

Firstly, we should not fall victim to the belief that the best multi-cultural curriculum is one based on the educational equivalent of proportional representation for the various cultural groups. We feel that a better strategy is to promote in schools the best education in each given field. If in some areas the material happens to derive from one particular cultural, ethnic, racial or religious group, so be it (p. 14).

This same document raises a further perspective on the curriculum. Whereas we have seen earlier objections to subjects in the arts, the authors of this paper indicate that even the 'value judgements' of science should be replaced by what they term 'spiritual learning':

THE MUSLIM CURRICULUM

2.4.1 It is quite clear that the modern curriculum is based largely upon temporal knowledge, some would say to the detriment of spiritual knowledge or development.

2.4.2 One clear improvement that Muslims would prefer to initiate would be to aid the development of a curriculum that incorporates spiritual learning as a counter-balance to the prominence of secular ideas in several key subjects. For example, modern science incorporates ideas and theories that are based upon a number of value judgements. One such way of offering balance may be to explain that this is the case whereby those value judgements are then allowed to be discussed so that a greater insight into the nature of the philosophies that underlie them may be achieved. In this manner the negative images of 'non-Western' science in mainstream education may begin to be re-evaluated. (p. 17)

The authors view the National Curriculum in negative terms, arguing that:

2.4.5 A concern of many Muslim schools, particularly at primary level, is the pressure on time allocation created by the NC. For example, many Muslim schools would like to devote time towards the teaching of Arabic, Qur'anic studies and a related understanding of Islamic practices. Given that the NC's time allocation is determined centrally, this goal can be difficult to achieve.

The aim seems to be the Islamization of the entire curriculum:

4.3.4 Previously, we recognised the importance of developing a support industry in content provision for curriculum topics that are of relevance to Islam. This issue is of course most pressing within Muslim schools where the entire curriculum will require content that is specifically designed with Muslim children in mind (p. 32).

This suggests that all humanities subjects, such as history (which must be less Eurocentric, despite our being a European country), geography, philosophy and literature will be reformulated.¹⁷ 'In the science subjects (physics, biology and chemistry)... there is likely to be a change in emphasis so that the processes of elevating deductive logic is de-emphasised and other forms of receiving knowledge are given their respective emphasis' (p. 32).¹⁸ Furthermore: 'In addition to Qur'an studies, Arabic and other Islamic subjects may become major elements within the curriculum' (p. 32).

This raises another important issue, namely the extent to which an Islamic curriculum dominates in some schools and in the vast majority seems far beyond what might be reasonably needed. There is no justification at all for thinking that every Muslim child must be deeply immersed in his or her faith from birth to adulthood.

Readers should turn to the Appendix where part of a very long syllabus for each school year has been laid out by the International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR), an Islamic education body chaired by Yusuf Islam.¹⁹ We have reproduced only the curriculum for grades one and two. The Board is based in South Africa, but works in the US, Canada, and Britain, where its connection to Yusuf Islam and his schools lends it much weight. It has produced 12 graded Islamic Studies syllabuses (reproduced here), along with textbooks and guidelines.

The first thing the outside observer will notice on reading through even just a few of the curricula set out by IBERR is the sheer volume of topics covered in each school year. It is hard to see how any child, if presented with this many subjects to master could possibly combine them with a fully expanded course from the National Curriculum. Many, if not all, Muslim schools devote a full morning to Islamic subjects and only an afternoon to secular ones. To Muslim educationalists, this is because the Islamic topics are the core subjects and the secular ones mere icing on the cake.

There is another problem here. It is not just that so much time is taken away from subjects that are essential to future careers and a proper understanding of how mainstream society works. Many schools simply reproduce traditional methods and periods of instruction. There is an undue emphasis on memorization, especially of the Qur'an. There is no room for questioning or challenging what are deemed sacred matters. Instead, there is a strong emphasis on authority, from the Qur'an to the Hadith literature, then on to classical writers, and finally to living imams and the school's own teachers. To spend a morning living conceptually in the seventh century (and geographically somewhere like Pakistan), then the afternoon tackling European history or mathematics or English cannot be pedagogically healthy. Ofsted and other UK educational bodies have a responsibility to look at this problem with great seriousness. It is not hard to see that, as in the case of the Darul Uloom schools, we may be walking back towards madrasa-

style schooling in which rote learning and the study of medieval texts will be the norm.

This is not dissimilar to the position taken by Ibrahim Hewitt, chairman of the Islamia Schools Trust. He has also served as a National Council member of the far-left party Respect, Assistant Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Development Officer of the Association of Muslim Schools, and former Assistant Director of the Muslim Educational Trust. He is the co-author of a proposal to ban Holocaust Memorial Day. In an article entitled 'The Case for Muslim Schools' he argued that:

... at a time when schools in 'Muslim'²⁰ countries are following the Western educational model in increasing numbers, Muslims in largely but not exclusively English-speaking countries are attempting to revive the spirit of Islamic education through schools which cover all aspects of the modern syllabus from an Islamic viewpoint and attempt to give their pupils a solid grounding in their faith through study of the *Qur'an*, the *ahadith*,²¹ Islamic history and the Arabic language.²²

'All aspects of the modern syllabus', he writes. But what need is there to Islamize any of the syllabus? The curriculum has been set to cater for British children, whatever their origin. It serves Chinese-origin children, Indian-origin children and Caribbean-origin children, helping them all gain access to the wider culture. It works for Christians, Jews, Hindus, Sikhs and most Muslims. Just as it would be absurd to force Chinese children to speak only Chinese, or Indian children Hindi, so we have to question whether an Islamized

curriculum is of use for anyone except radical Muslims, and whether or not it will achieve anything but to disadvantage Muslim children.

One way in which such disadvantage might take place (and in many cases does so already) is expressed in this disturbing sentence by Sahib Mustaqim Bleher, a hardline Muslim and a founder of the now-defunct Islamic Party of Britain: '...our children need not only to be good Muslims but also, as they live in a predominantly non-Muslim society, they need to understand the way a non-Muslim thinks without being fooled by his superimposed logic'.²³ The phrase 'the way a non-Muslim thinks' is chilling, carrying as it does strong implications of racial stereotyping, replaced here by its religious equivalent. Throughout Bleher's article there is a constant refrain of Islamic superiority and non-Muslim inferiority.

As an example of how Islamization might work in practice, Hewitt links it to what he believes would be a better approach to religious education:

... religious schools are more a true reflection of a multi-faith society than multi-faith schools. As far as Islam is concerned, it is reasonable to mention here that a deep study of the *Qur'an* (something which is quite feasible within a Muslim school but almost impossible in a non-Muslim institution) will, as a matter of course, lead to a study of the followers of prophets Jesus and Moses (peace be upon them both) which, in turn, can lead on to a study of modern-day Christianity and Judaism.²⁴

In reality, this is far from the truth, and illustrates very well how inappropriate an overriding Muslim

approach may be. The Quranic narratives of Moses, Jesus, and other Biblical figures are far removed from those that occur in Judaism or Christianity. To teach Christian children that Jesus did not die on the cross, for example, might be considered an impertinence by their parents. And if modern Islamic polemic against Judaism and Christianity is any guide to where this might lead, that sense of impertinence could have disastrous consequences. Religious education can only be done by remaining faithful to each tradition or, at a higher level, by an objective academic investigation based on empirical fact.

The Saudi dimension

Further evidence that Islamization of the curriculum may have undesirable consequences comes from Saudi Arabian textbooks and those in Saudi schools abroad. So far only one British Saudi school (the King Fahad Academy, London) has been declared to be in possession of hate literature in textbook form, but there are twenty-four Saudi schools in all in the UK, and it is possible that some Saudi textbooks may be found in other schools, just as Saudi literature has been found in a variety of mosques.²⁵

The problem of Saudi textbooks first came to attention when a Saudi report on the problem was published in 2004.²⁶ This report identified issues in the Islamic studies programme within Saudi Arabia. According to this report, the Kingdom's religious studies curriculum 'encourages violence toward others,

and misguides the pupils into believing that in order to safeguard their own religion, they must violently repress and even physically eliminate the “other”. On several occasions after that, the Saudi government issued reassuring statements to the effect that it had taken steps to mend the situation.²⁷

But when Freedom House’s Center for Religious Freedom re-examined what was being taught in Saudi schools, it discovered that:

... the Saudi public school religious curriculum continues to propagate an ideology of hate toward the ‘unbeliever’, that is, Christians, Jews, Shiites, Sufis, Sunni Muslims who do not follow Wahhabi doctrine, Hindus, atheists and others. This ideology is introduced in a religion textbook in the first grade and reinforced and developed in following years of the public education system, culminating in the twelfth grade, where a text instructs students that it is a religious obligation to wage militant jihad against infidels in order to ‘spread the faith’.²⁸

Regarding Christians, Jews, Polytheists (including Muslims who are not followers of Wahhabism) and other infidels, the books:

- Command Muslims to ‘hate’ Christians, Jews, polytheists and other ‘unbelievers,’ including non-Wahhabi Muslims, though, incongruously, not to treat them ‘unjustly’.
- Teach that the Crusades never ended, and identify the American Universities in Beirut and in Cairo, other Western and Christian social service providers, media outlets, centers for academic studies of Orientalism, and campaigns for women’s rights as part of the modern phase of the Crusades.

MUSIC, CHESS AND OTHER SINS

- Teach that ‘the Jews and the Christians are enemies of the [Muslim] believers’ and that ‘the clash’ between the two realms ‘continues until the Day of Resurrection’.
- Instruct students not to ‘greet’, ‘befriend’, ‘imitate’, ‘show loyalty to’, ‘be courteous to’ or ‘respect’ non-believers.
- Define jihad to include ‘wrestling with the infidels by calling them to the faith and battling against them’ and assert that the spread of Islam through jihad is a ‘religious obligation’.²⁹

Many of the textbooks are anti-Semitic. Books:

- Instruct that ‘the struggle between Muslims and Jews’ will continue ‘until the hour [of judgment]’ and that ‘Muslims will triumph because they are right’ and ‘he who is right is always victorious’.
- Cite a selective teaching of violence against Jews, while in the same lesson, ignoring the passages of the Qur’an and hadiths [narratives of the life of the Prophet] that counsel tolerance.
- Teach the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as historical fact and relate modern events to it.
- Discuss Jews in violent terms, blaming them for virtually all the ‘subversion’ and wars of the modern world.³⁰

In an appendix, the report provides examples of objectionable material from a range of textbooks. Here are four:

- ‘Every religion other than Islam is false.’
- ‘Fill in the blanks with the appropriate words (Islam, hellfire): Every religion other than _____ is false. Whoever dies outside of Islam enters_____.’

THE MUSLIM CURRICULUM

- 'Give examples of false religions, like Judaism, Christianity, paganism, etc.'
- 'Explain that when someone dies outside of Islam, hellfire is his fate.'³¹

On 15 November 2007, the US Congress passed Resolution 262 calling on the Secretary of State to take various forms of action in order to bring the Saudis to heel on this issue, drawing particular attention to the Islamic Saudi Academy with campuses in Alexandria and Fairfax, Virginia.³² In the same year, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, a panel formed by Congress, recommended closure of the two Virginia schools. The Saudis denied that their academy fostered intolerance, but in June 2008 the commission, having obtained and studied textbooks from the schools, reported the ongoing presence of intolerant and violent passages. Books taught students that it is permissible for Muslims to kill adulterers and apostates, that 'the Jews conspired against Islam and its people', and that Muslims are permitted to take the lives and property of those they considered 'polytheists'.³³

This may seem of little relevance to a report on Muslim Schools in the UK, but grave concerns exist about the use of such textbooks in Saudi schools in this country. In 2007, Colin Cook, an English Muslim convert who taught at the King Fahad Academy in London, revealed the existence at the school of textbooks similar or identical to those found by

Freedom House. According to a report in the *Independent*:

A Muslim teacher called Colin Cook has revealed that children there are taught, via Saudi textbooks, that Jews are 'repugnant' and Christians are 'pigs'. Exercises for five-year olds include the charming exercise, 'Mention some repugnant characteristics of Jews'. Cook repeatedly heard children in the playground idolising Bin Laden. Challenged on Newsnight about whether she will stop using these racist books, the headteacher, Sumaya Alyusuf, said, 'No ... I cannot withdraw them. There are good chapters in the books.'³⁴

Cook was dismissed from his post, but in the following year he took the school to an industrial tribunal which found in his favour.³⁵ In 2007, textbooks obtained from the school by the think tank Policy Exchange taught similar ideas.³⁶

Earlier, in 2003, 300 textbooks were seized by the German authorities from the King Fahad Academy in Bonn.³⁷ There followed accusations of links to al-Qa'ida and other radical jihadi groups, and calls for the closure of the school, which did not happen.³⁸

More curriculum issues

There are two chief reasons for the teaching of dominantly Islamic curricula in the UK. One is a fear that children may lose their way in British culture, abandon their faith and become thoroughly assimilated into non-Muslim society. 'What are seen as the corrupting influences of a permissive society are deemed irreconcilable with Islam, and it is feared that unless an

Islamic agenda is inserted into the educational curriculum, the younger generation will fall prey to un-Islamic forces.’³⁹

According to Muhammad Akram Khan-Cheema, ‘for many Muslim parents it appears that the education in state-funded schools is imposing a set of moral, spiritual, cultural and social values, not of their choice and certainly not in consultation with them, by those headteachers who have a tendency (sic) to display a fair degree of intellectual arrogance’.⁴⁰ The issue, clearly, is not the quality of the education in state schools, but a deep-seated rejection by parents of mainstream morals, spiritual values, culture and society—a sweeping dismissal that allows little room for young Muslims to share their upbringing with their non-Muslim peers. The answer for such parents is, as Ibrahim Hewitt puts it:

... a *complete* Islamic education as delivered in a well-resourced Muslim school [that] fulfils the legal requirements for an education which ‘promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society...’ in a way which no ‘ordinary’ state school can do for its Muslim pupils...⁴¹

For Hewitt, faith must be comprehensive: ‘Even amongst Muslims, faith does not play the all-embracing role in life that it should, indeed must, if Islam is really going to be an effective means by which society can be run.’ But surely Islam is not going to run British society at any time in the near future? Is Hewitt trying to fit his ideal of education into a broad socio-political vision? Certainly, he believes that ‘most

people involved in running Muslim schools are dedicated to Islamic education in its fullest sense', echoing his earlier appeal to a 'complete' Islamic education.

He takes this further when he writes that:

... the tenets of Islam influence every part of the curriculum, something not possible in non-Muslim schools. This does not mean that some subjects are avoided if they contradict Islam or entail un-Islamic practice; the subjects themselves may not be taboo, but the methodology used to teach them in state schools certainly is. Hence, Muslim schools' curricula are tailored to meet the requirements of Islam so that the pupils get the benefit of study without having to compromise on religious principles.⁴²

This is a common position, and it is one of the most worrying. If the reason for taking children into exclusively Muslim schools is to provide them with an Islamized version of the curriculum, then this goes far beyond differences of dress or questions of what hymns, if any, to sing in assembly. Let's be sensible about this. There is no 'Muslim' way to study mathematics, just as there is no 'Hindu' mathematics, 'Jewish' mathematics or whatever. There is, equally, no Muslim way of studying French or English Literature or science or geography or history. The whole point about Western academic education, especially in its higher levels, is the development of a sense of objectivity combined with the ability to carry out critical analysis. Critical analysis and free enquiry in the rationalist sense is something lacking in traditional Islamic education, which is still wedded to rote

learning, regurgitation of texts and unquestioning acceptance of authority. And, as Pervez Hoodbhoy has pointed out, thinking differently in itself carries risks for most Muslims.

Hewitt's notion (which is repeated by many other Muslim educationalists) that state schools (and, presumably, non-Muslim private and faith schools) cannot instill proper spiritual, moral and other values in Muslim children needs to be examined a lot more carefully, for it is the crucial argument in all this. It is, in fact, a dangerous and extreme statement. We know perfectly well that British society is capable of providing exactly these things. Our society may be imperfect in many respects, but our basic values are sound. British schools can provide a foundation in issues like human rights, male/female equality, freedom of religion and so on which are still largely absent in the Islamic world. Equally, by engaging in mainstream school life, Muslims may be able to provide guidance in areas where we are weak. But treating Muslim schools as the only places where a viable moral education may be obtained is a sure recipe for non-involvement in society in later life, entrenching divisions that should not exist in the first place. It is also a certain way to guarantee that a wholesome Islamic influence on British life will never be exercised.

Hewitt defends his position in this way:

The fear of intolerance and what has been termed voluntary apartheid prompts many opposed to Muslim schools to claim that children need to be in multi-faith schools which

reflect society if they are not to develop intolerant attitudes towards those of other faiths (and no faith). Others propose that schools be made purely secular in nature, in other words religion-free zones, to achieve the same aim. Such arguments fail, not least because secularism is not a basic position to adopt; those who advocate a secular lifestyle do so out of choice. Why should they be allowed to impose their chosen lifestyle upon others with differing views? This sort of intolerance in the name of tolerance makes a mockery of freedom to choose...

If it is to be considered intolerance for the British educational system to want to treat Muslims on an equal basis with Christians, Jews, Hindus, and Sikhs we may feel we have entered an Alice in Wonderland world where up is down and black white. Nothing in British educational policy is intended to discriminate against Muslims, and Ibrahim Hewitt knows it. That Mr Hewitt seems unable to grasp the difference between genuine tolerance and genuine intolerance is a matter for concern. For intolerance one would have to go to Iran, where members of the country's largest religious minority, the Baha'is, are banned from attending university by the Islamic regime.

The truth behind these demands is revealed at the end of Hewitt's paper, when he writes: 'Underpinning the whole issue is a simple case of Haqq (truth) versus Batil (falsehood).' Hewitt is speaking about a total, irresolvable dichotomy, one that has dominated Islamic thinking since the very inception of the faith.⁴³ When people believe they and they alone possess the truth, they create issues for society at large. One thing

is certain: people who think they alone are right should not be running schools.

A final factor informing the style and content of the curriculum for Muslim schools is a concept named *da'wa*. *Da'wa* in Arabic means a call or information, and in a religious context it means an invitation to Islam, a call to non-believers to become Muslims, and for backsliding Muslims to intensify their faith. *Da'wa* is a major Muslim activity around the world today, with vast sums being spent on the establishment of missionary centres or on other centres for propagation, such as mosques. This international endeavour is led by a number of groups, including the Saudis, who have spent an estimated \$80 or \$90 billion on missionary enterprises over the last ten years, the Tablighi Jamaat, a Pakistani missionary organization very active in the UK, the Islamic Society of North America, and many others.

In that context, it is worth noting that Dr Musharraf Hussain, Director of the Karimia Trust, has been described as someone who 'passionately believes that Muslim schools are the vanguard of *da'wa* in the West'.⁴⁴

Da'wa is featured in many schools. The Waqf al-Birr Trust, an educational charity that runs two schools, has a separate section for missionary work. The Islamic Da'wah Academy in Leicester is divided into two sections, one for academic work, the other for missionary training. Given the large number of Deobandi-oriented Darul Uloom schools in the UK, which exist to train imams and religious scholars, it

seems that many Muslim schools in this country have programmes not wholly related to the ordinary purposes of education, even with an Islamic colouring, but are trying to teach an exclusively Islamic course of studies.

We already know that the impact of pre-formulated and idealized material on the curriculum can be extremely damaging.⁴⁵ Here, the pressure for a retrogressive reformulation of the curriculum comes from puritan and sectarian forms of Islam. Although the authors of reports like the ones we have cited above tend to call themselves Muslims *tout court*, the truth is that they come from rather narrow strands within Islamic tradition. They condemn art, music, literature and so forth; but there is music in Islam, from the Sufi devotional songs of Pakistani Qawwali to the exquisite tones of Persian classical music to the immensely popular singing of the late Egyptian diva, Umm Kalthum; there is great art in abundance, from the representational painting of Persian, Mughal and Ottoman miniatures to the breathtaking refinements of *nasta'liq* calligraphy to the splendid calligraphic panels on the sides and domes of mosques across the Middle East and Central Asia, to the European-influenced portraits of Iranian kings and princes; there is literature, from the ethereal Sufi poetry of Rumi and Hafiz, to the novels of Nobel prize-winner Nagib Mahfouz. But Mahfouz had to endure death threats and an assassination attempt for 'blasphemy' in one of his novels, Sufism is deeply hated by the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, and portraiture is despised by all

fundamentalists. Calls for the elimination of such things do not come from moderates.

Some schools foster curricula that are mere reproductions of what is taught in Pakistani or Bangladeshi madrasas. In particular, the Darul Uloom schools, of which we count some twenty-seven, have been established to be close mirrors of the Darul Ulooms of India and Pakistan. The original Darul Uloom⁴⁶ was a seminary founded at Deoband, India, in 1866. Out of it emerged the Deobandi religious movement, a Wahhabi-oriented school of Islam that propagates a puritanical and hubristic style of the faith stressing the Qur'an and the deeds and sayings of the Prophet. As it spread, Deobandism created a growing number of religious schools. Its curriculum covers an eight-year course of exclusively Islamic subjects, taught in a traditional style through long-established texts.

Deobandism spread into Pakistan and Bangladesh, and then to Afghanistan, where it spawned the Taliban. Most of the Taliban leadership were educated in the Darul Uloom Haqqania madrasa in Pakistan's North-West Frontier province. The madrasa has been called 'the university of jihad'. It was also in Pakistan that a Deobandi branch movement was formed, known as the Tablighi Jamaat, which is now the largest Muslim missionary enterprise in the world.

With the emigration to the UK of growing numbers of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims, a Deobandi presence has begun to colour and almost dominate British Islam. Deobandis now control some 600 out of the UK's 1,400 mosques, giving them a street

presence unequalled by any other grouping based in Britain. The core support for Deobandism in the UK has come from Indian communities, mainly Gujaratis and Asians who had been expelled from East Africa.⁴⁷ Deobandi influence centres on the various urban areas where South Asian Muslims have come to concentrate: the mill towns of the North-west (especially Bolton, Preston and Blackburn); Leicester in the East Midlands; Dewsbury and Batley in West Yorkshire; and several London boroughs.⁴⁸

Jonathan Birt argues that the key to Deobandi centrality in British Muslim life is the ability of the movement to gain control of educational institutions.⁴⁹ This is clear in Leicester, which has 130 registered Muslim scholars (*'ulama*), one quarter of whom are now UK-trained; over twenty mosques; numerous weekend and evening *madrasas*; eight Muslim faith schools, including three seminaries—the Darul Uloom Leicester, the Jameah Girls Academy (another Darul Uloom), and the Islamic Da'wah Academy (also a Darul Uloom).

The Tablighi Jamaat, which enjoys a membership of millions worldwide, has its European headquarters in Dewsbury, from which it exerts a wide influence on young Muslims that has been seen in many quarters as harmful.⁵⁰ The Jamaat already runs one school, the Institute of Islamic Education (Jaamia Talimul Islam) in Dewsbury, which operates an intensive Islamics course in the mornings. They now have plans to open a second madrasa for 500 boys near the 2012 Olympic village and possibly in proximity to the 'mega-mosque'

which they have been trying to build on the same site.⁵¹

Certainly, some of their attitudes do not contribute to social well-being and cohesion. One of their leading representatives has spoken out in terms that reveal the movement's intentions to be deeply suspect. 'Ebrahim Rangooni has said that the movement seeks to "rescue the ummah [the global Muslim community] from the culture and civilisation of the Jews, the Christians and [other] enemies of Islam". Its aim, he wrote, is to "create such hatred for their ways as human beings have for urine and excreta".⁵² Mr Rangooni has also given warning to parents that non-Muslim schools 'turn humans into animals' and that sending a Muslim child to a British college 'is as dangerous as throwing them into hell with your own hands'.⁵³

Surely someone who regards our ways as though they were urine and excreta should not be allowed to exercise the least influence on the development of young Muslims in this country?

Deobandi influence in Britain focuses on the [Darul Uloom al-'Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah](#) (the Arabo-Islamic House of Sciences) in Bury, considered to be the UK 'mother seminary'.⁵⁴ Founded by its present head, Gujarati scholar Shaykh Yusuf Motala,⁵⁵ the school offers the standard Deobandi syllabus known as Dars-e Nezami, first put together in seventeenth-century India. The curriculum provides for a restricted range of Islamic subjects, including *tafsir* (Qur'an interpretation), Qur'an memorization, Arabic grammar, Persian, Urdu, Arabic, Islamic history, Islamic

jurisprudence (*fiqh*), legal studies, and Sufism. As we shall see, British Darul Uloom offer this traditional prospectus, while many schools and madrasas offer elements such as Qur'an memorization and recital. It should be clear that such a curriculum in no way prepares young British Muslims for life outside a self-imposed ghetto. Other than serving as imams or working within an Islamic context, graduates of these institutions are effectively unsuited to the UK job market.

Dr Musharraf Hussain, director of the Karimia Institute and a government adviser on mosques, has said that 'too many seminary students studied a narrow syllabus and inhabited a cocooned world that left them ill-equipped to connect with the twenty-first-century concerns of young British Muslims'.⁵⁶ He adds that hundreds of students graduate each year 'without sufficient communication skills, without leadership skills, and without a good understanding of British culture. The people coming out of British seminaries are detached because they can't fit in. And the young people who desperately need their guidance, knowledge, and moral values will be deprived in the long run because they won't feel comfortable approaching such imams.'⁵⁷

Some impression of the teaching problems at Darul Uloom-type schools may be gleaned from the registration inspection of a Scottish seminary for girls, the Imam Muhammad Zakariya school in Dundee (now closed). Perhaps it is unfair to extrapolate from the picture painted of lessons taught there to other

academies, but it is clear that all Deobandi schools follow much the same pattern in respect of curriculum and teaching methods, so it does not seem unreasonable to use this critique by the Scottish inspectors.

The overall quality of learning and teaching was unsatisfactory. Programmes placed too much emphasis on content rather than understanding and skills. Much of the teaching simply required the pupils to reproduce closely what the teacher had said.

The quality of teaching varied from fair to unsatisfactory. A limited range of teaching approaches was used. The teaching was didactic with insufficient interaction between pupils and teachers. Questioning was almost always closed and explanations of learning points frequently lacked clarity. In some instances answers to pupils' questions were confusing for pupils. Teachers made too much use of dictating or copying information.

The quality of learning was unsatisfactory in all classes. Pupils worked passively and undertook tasks obediently. However, they did not show any independent thinking or take an active involvement in their learning. They had little opportunity to take responsibility for their learning apart from completing homework tasks. In all classes the pace of learning was too slow and more able pupils needed considerably greater challenge.

As a result of this poor learning and teaching, individual needs were not being well met. Most pupils were working on the same tasks with insufficient account taken of their prior attainment. The choice of activities did not match individual needs.

Assessment of pupils' progress was limited. Information gathered from assessment was not used effectively to plan to meet individual needs. Teachers set tests at the end of each

term for Islamic studies but only once a year for secular subjects. Most tests measured only pupils' recall of their class notes on the content of lessons without requiring them to show any application or understanding of what they had learned. In addition, some were inappropriate to the age and stage of the pupils. The marks were shared with parents in termly reports, but the meaning of the marks for individual pupils was unclear.

There was no system to monitor pupils' progress across subjects. Staff sometimes praised work inappropriately.⁵⁸

Around one hundred and forty students graduate each year from British Muslim seminaries, of which 80 per cent are Deobandis. Uniquely in Europe, the UK produces a surplus of seminary graduates. Since there are not enough mosque-related jobs to go round, many now look for work teaching in the Islamic private school sector. Apart from the Darul Uloom, a number of independent academies have sprung up. These are in the control of younger ulama, such as Riyadhul Haq in Birmingham and Mufti Saiful Islam in Bradford, both graduates of Bury.⁵⁹

The above-mentioned Abu Yusuf Riyadhul Haq is widely regarded as the UK's leading Deobandi. Born in Gujarat, he came to the UK at the age of three and entered the Darul Uloom at Bury when he was 13. He is utterly opposed to integration at any level. Yet he remains a popular and influential figure within certain sections of the British Muslim community.

Haq is an arch-separatist, whose contempt for British society in all its aspects is overweening. In a speech delivered by him in 2003, he preaches that

Muslims should have absolutely no relations with non-Muslims and should ensure that everything they do, from the way they eat to how they dress, must be in direct opposition to the customs of the kuffar (unbelievers). 'Anyone who thinks that they can work with the kuffar, associate with them, mix with them, stand and sit with them, move amongst them and not be affected, is in denial and is a liar to himself'.⁶⁰ Again, 'Allah has warned us in the Koran, do not befriend the kuffar, do not align yourselves with the kuffar'.⁶¹

Riyadhul Haq is also a shameless anti-Semite. 'The Jews constantly claim in their books, in their publications, in their literature and in their interfaith dialogue and meetings, that we strive to lofty ideals, we strive for peace, we work for harmony, etc., and all we are trying to do is live according to the way of the prophets, so on and so forth: just meaningless, rehearsed rhetoric being regurgitated'.⁶²

Or: 'A Muslim life means nothing to them. If they show restraint and desist from killing a Muslim or Muslims, hundreds of thousands, it's not because of any compassion for Muslim life. It's always self-interest, either because it harms their image or they fear retaliation. And this is the law to be found in general in most Jewish books.'⁶³

And again: 'Because non-Jewish life means nothing, a Jew is not permitted by Jewish law to save the life of a non-Jew, no matter what happens. In Israel, right now, there are many Jewish doctors who refuse to treat any non-Jew, even if it's a child who is dying, because

they believe it is forbidden for them according to Jewish law to treat a Gentile, a non-Jew.’⁶⁴

It may be mainly on account of his anti-Semitism that he finds favour with the neo-Nazi far right. When the Canadian government banned him from speaking at a youth Tarbiyah conference there in 2006, Paul Fromm, leader of the Canadian branch of Stormfront, defended him and his right to free speech.⁶⁵

Muslim Schools and Women

Outright anti-Semitic statements, though not unknown in connection with schools, are outnumbered by the many instances of misogyny, including active moves to restrict the freedom of Muslim girls. Such actions rely heavily for their justification on a belief that women are designed to be daughters, wives and mothers and that they should not venture outside their homes or, if they do so, should not be seen without heavy veils. The website for the [parent body of the al-Mu'min primary school](#) [contains the following statement](#):

There are three grades of Purdah (veiling):

1. The first is that the woman covers every part of her body except her face, her hands and her feet.
2. The second is that the woman covers her face, her hands and her feet also.
3. The third is that woman keeps herself indoor or keeps herself hidden in such a veil that no-one can ever see her clothes.

This stage is the greatest of all the three.

This will strike most readers as excessive, yet it is part of a site run by a primary school. Hard questions must be asked by government as to how healthy it is to allow hardline Puritanism like this to inform the lives of young and vulnerable children. There is little question that a girl brought up under such restrictions

may never be psychologically robust enough to enter ordinary British life; may never be able to take up employment in the mainstream world; may never be capable of interacting with men at any but the most circumscribed levels.

If a young girl is made to wear hijab and taught that adopting it is the only way a woman may comport herself in the world, by the time she grows up and leaves school, a broad psychological barrier will have been planted between her and 99 per cent of British society. If a grown woman were to choose to wear hijab in any form, non-Muslims might regret it, but would honour her choice. However many Muslim schools are enforcing a strict rule of hijab, usually in a form involving kameez with a headscarf, but in other cases jilbab or something like it, sometimes from the age of four ([al-Noor Independent School](#), Ilford; [Madani Secondary Girls' School](#), East London; [Iqra School](#), Oxford; [al-Islah School](#), Blackburn¹).

We believe this to be harmful on several grounds. Some rulings by '*ulama*' and *fuqaha*' argue that women and girls must wear the veil in order to protect them. But it does not protect them so much as it infantilizes them and keeps them under the tutelage of men. By putting a four-year-old or older child in hijab, she is receiving a strong impression that, come what may, she must continue to wear body and head covering for the rest of her life—which appears to be the purpose of such rules in a school context—rather than learning how to make such decisions for herself. The over-protection of children is known to backfire, making the

child more dependent and less confident. Western styles of school uniform are invariably modest and very far from an insult to Islamic standards of decency, unless those standards involve a level of cover that is unnecessary in the UK. Full cover also has the undesirable effect of cutting Muslim girls off from the society around them, making them more likely to seek out Muslim friends and environments in preference to non-Muslims. And this clearly makes them ill-suited to an adult life in universities or the workplace.

This is disturbing in one other regard. The veil is justified on the grounds that a woman's body acts as an irresistible lure for men, and that it is only by covering it as completely as possible that men will remain safe from temptation. By veiling young girls, it seems that some schools are sexualizing the bodies of immature children, implanting in them a premature sense of needing to cover themselves from the male gaze. Government may need to ask about the appropriateness of such a measure and whether it is, in fact, fair to make such covering compulsory before the age of maturity. We believe it is the clear duty of any educational establishment to treat schoolchildren as schoolchildren.

At present, government policy says only that head-teachers 'may be justified' in outlawing face-covering veils in state schools, but there is no outright ban, much less any attempt to outlaw veiling specifically in Muslim schools.²

While using the veil as a token of sexual differentiation, many schools impose a strict segregation of

the sexes, something that continues within many parts of the Muslim community at large. In its document *Meeting the Needs of Muslim Pupils in State Schools*, the Muslim Council of Britain insists that shaking hands with the opposite sex even at prize ceremonies is prohibited.³

Ask-Imam is an online site providing authoritative rulings on all matters pertaining to Islam. It can be accessed through the website of [al-Jamiah al-Islamiyyah Darul Uloom](#), Bolton. It carries [extensive rulings on women](#).

Here are some examples:

Women may not attend mixed-gender universities. Men should try to avoid them.

[Masturbation for women and men is a 'filthy and evil practice'](#).

[Rather than study, women should remain at home unless forced to go outside.](#)

[A woman who has been raped is jointly responsible for the crime with the man who raped her if she 'does not cover properly and wears revealing clothing, which seduces men'.](#)

Men have authority over women. A woman is not permitted to serve as the head of any organization. See below.

[Female circumcision](#) [female genital mutilation, FGM]⁴ is commendable (*mustahabb*).

[A Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim man.](#)

Women must speak to men in stern voices [in order to avoid using soft, 'seductive' tones that may incite lust]. See below.

Men are more intelligent than women.

There must be no free mixing of men and women.

The Western view of sexual equality is false, claiming that a woman can do what a man can do.

'It is not permissible for strange males and females to talk to one another without any valid Shar'ee excuse. If there is a valid reason, the talk should be restricted to the necessity. In that situation too, it is prohibited for the female to talk in a soft and alluring tone as that conduct excites a male's passion. and Allah Knows Best. Mufti Ebrahim Desai.'

Allah has bestowed on man the capability to rule, become prime minister/president or simply speaking as a leader of any community. Allah mentions, "Men are overseers over women". (Qur'an). Men are meant to go out into the world and seek a living, unlike women who are embodiments of concealment. They are not meant to go out into the world and become public figures. It is in the home where the honour, respect and dignity of women lie. Today, pandemonium has broken out because women have emerged from their homes. Women are being treated as advertisement tools. They are being used disgracefully to market even the pettiest item. Therefore, women are urged to return to their abodes,

fulfil their respective natural responsibilities and abandon their unnatural ambitions. This will restore the smooth functioning of the universe.'

Q. Can a woman go out to work?

A. According to Shariah, it is not permissible for a woman to leave her home except in dire need and necessity. The only exclusion to work is for that woman who has no relatives to support her and she is forced to seek a livelihood that is sufficient for her to live upon.

Similarly, the [Jameah Girls Academy in Leicester](#) has a direct link to [a fatwa site](#),⁵ [Darul Iftaa](#), run by the school's own patron, Muhammad ibn Adam al-Kawthari. Among his many distasteful rulings are these: He places severe restrictions on male doctors treating female patients; he rules that women may not swim (even for medical reasons) where a male lifeguard is present, or where there are non-Muslim women; using tampons is 'disliked' (*makruh*—a classification in shari'a law); a woman may not travel beyond 48 miles without her husband or a close relative accompanying her; a female is encouraged to remain within the confines of her house as much as possible; polygamy is permissible. If anyone were to ridicule polygamy, he would become an unbeliever; it is a grave sin for a woman to refuse sex to her husband; it is forbidden to have close, intimate relations with or have love for non-Muslims; Muslims are not to sit, eat,

live or mingle with them; the legal punishment for adultery is stoning.

Rulings such as these would, if applied, reduce the lives of women to something not known in Western society since the Dark Ages. That they may have an impact on British-born Muslim girls and young women runs directly contrary to the whole purpose of providing equal educational opportunities to both sexes, and makes a mockery of the basic principle of Western education, which is to prepare children for a future life in mainstream society. The very process of asking for fatwas, often on the most trivial of issues, takes responsibility for people's actions out of their hands and places it firmly within those of a small elite of religious scholars, many of whom are, frankly, wholly lacking in any understanding of British society. In the case of susceptible children, many of whom may be brought up to believe that there is always a 'right' answer and that that answer is never one they themselves can make, the practice has alarming implications in a society of free, rational and uncoerced individuals. If we wish to integrate Muslim children (and adults) into that sort of society, very large compromises will have to be made by the Muslim clerical establishment.

We have cited fatwas from a variety of websites, all sites that some schools have accessed. We recommend them, because their content is something that never normally appears before the non-Muslim public, whether in books, on TV documentaries or online. They say more about real Islam than any number of

introductory books can hope to explain. Here are the real anxieties, concerns, worries, aspirations and day-to-day problems of ordinary Muslims, and with the questions here are the often inflexible rules that their Muftis hold them to, setting an exhausting and demanding standard.

It is into such a culture, a culture in which adults ask permission to do the most simple things, that the children in Muslim schools are being trained. Whether it's the length of one's trousers or the choice of one's life partner, there is a right way and a wrong way for everything a Muslim does.

Young men and young women are being drilled to live their lives very differently to their non-Muslim counterparts. They will never date, never mingle with the opposite sex, never fall in love ('love', according to Mufti Ebrahim Desai, 'is prohibited'), never attend a musical concert, never play sports, never contemplate converting to another religion or none, never reach an important decision for themselves. That is the context within which the schools' debate must take place. We desperately want them to integrate. But these are not ordinary British children.

Further insight into the role of Muslim schools in limiting the range of life options available to girls is given in an article by an emancipated Muslim woman and journalist, Saeeda Khanum, entitled 'Education and the Muslim Girl'.⁶ Writing on the basis of her experience of Muslim girls' schools in Bradford, Khanum writes: 'These schools are being set up in this country in an attempt to reproduce the religious and

cultural values of Muslim home life. The schools act as daytime custodians, ensuring that Muslim girls do not stray very far from orthodoxy.'

She argues further that 'The education of Muslim girls has less to do with schooling than with the exercise of control by Muslim men over the lives of women in the family and wider community. Generally, control is maintained by monitoring the level and amount of interaction with male relatives and local community'. (p. 136) This control expresses itself in a denial of the potential of young Muslim girls and women: 'In practice Islam has come to represent what is allowed rather than what is possible.'

This control is exercised, in the case of women, through the concept of '*izzat* or honour, a cultural rather than religious notion that nonetheless finds its ideal sphere of operation in Islamic schools: 'For women the idea of *izzat* has become more blatantly a means of social control, and Muslim schools have become the perfect institutions for exercising that control. Similarly, Muslim fundamentalists, like those of other religions, have misappropriated the word "freedom". Freedom to explore one's own potential as a human being—intellectually, socially and sexually—has come to mean being "permissive" and therefore morally corruptible.'⁷

Muslim Schools and Ofsted

Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills and is a department of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England. It was created in 2007 when the Office for Standards in Education merged with the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Her Majesty's Inspector for Schools (HMCI) has responsibility for inspecting the standards (academic, managerial and physical) of independent and state schools, local education authorities (LEAs), child day care and childminding, and Ofsted monitors the work of the Independent Schools Inspectorate.

Ofsted reports are thorough, rigorous and methodical. Taken as a whole, they provide a picture of Britain's primary and secondary schools and the education provided for millions of English children. Though much disliked by teachers, for whom inspections are a considerable strain, they are clearly an indispensable guide to how well schools, whether state or private, are performing (or underperforming).

In January 2008, it was announced that the government had approved the establishment of a new independent inspectorate. This innovative body—to be known as the Bridge Schools Inspectorate—is designed to inspect the schools in the Christian Schools Trust and the Association of Muslim Schools. It will be regularly vetted by Ofsted but will operate independ-

ently of it. This is not the first independent inspectorate set up to deal with faith schools: the Schools Inspection Service inspects 38 schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, an umbrella organization for the separatist Christian sect the Exclusive Brethren, referred to earlier. What this new arrangement seems to mean is that Muslim schools will, in effect, become self-policing. If that is the case, given the evidence presented in this report, there are grounds for believing that self-inspection will only exacerbate the considerable problems we have found in Muslim schools in this country.

The Ofsted reports that have been published for some schools concerning which we have raised questions suggest that many inspectors do not have the knowledge, the experience, or the skills necessary for identifying and commenting on the concerns we have raised. It may be that it is not the remit of the inspectors to comment on such matters, yet report after report paints a glowing picture of the vibrant Islamic atmosphere prevailing at this school or that, even though a different form of inspection might suggest something different. Here, taken at random, is a statement from the 2007 report on al-Mu'min, a primary school in Bradford:

Al Mumin Primary School meets its aims very successfully. It provides a good education for its pupils and ensures that they have good attitudes and a very good work ethic. Pupils' progress is good and they reach standards which are in line with and often better than those expected for their age. The provision made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development of pupils is outstanding and that made for their welfare, health and safety is good. The school meets all of the regulations.¹

Anyone studying the website for this school and the associated *al-Mu'min* Journal might conclude that it may not be teaching healthy values after all, and you may think that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils must be assessed by more rigorous standards. A school that teaches (see p. 31) that [Western culture is 'evil'](#), that [wedding photographs and holiday photos](#) are '[an evil practice of the unbelievers](#)', that theatres and cinemas are 'places of evil enjoyment' and that '[the person who plays chess is like one who dips his hand in the blood of a swine](#)' could do lasting harm to receptive minds.

Tawhid Boys' School of North London (see pp. 51-2)

Date of Ofsted inspection: 19-20 March 2008²

Name of reporting inspector: Michèle Messaoudi

Ofsted visit 19-20 March 2008): The Ofsted report states that the school provides a 'good quality of education and meets its aims.' (p. 3); 'The curriculum is good... It is broad and balanced in key stages 2 and 3.' (p. 3) Note also, however, that the report does also state that 'students have limited opportunity for creative work.'

The Tawhid Boys' School of North London itself expresses a desire to keep the curriculum 'within the bounds of Shari'a [Islamic jurisprudent]'. Their website states: '[Here we have a great opportunity. To present](#)

an alternative to the prevalent and dominant waves of Western Art and values that has (sic) enveloped our attitude to this subject.'

Or again: 'Art is not for art's sake; practicality and educational usefulness must be the main objective.'³

Madani Secondary Girls School (see p. 52)

Date of Ofsted inspection: 13-16 February 2008⁴

Name of reporting inspector: Michèle Messaoudi

The Ofsted report states that Madani Girls School 'provides a satisfactory quality of education... [and] makes outstanding provision for students' personal development' (p. 3); 'They [the pupils] are aware of their future role as proactive young British Muslim women.' (p. 5); 'They are well-prepared for life in a multicultural society' (p. 5).

The website of the Madani Secondary Girls' School states: 'Our children are exposed to a culture [i.e. British culture] that is in opposition with almost everything Islam stands for.'

Al-Islah School (see p. 80)

Date of Ofsted inspection: 4-5 September 2007

Name of reporting inspector: Michèle Messaoudi

The Ofsted report states that 'provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding' (p. 1).⁵

According to Linda Pressly, producer of a documentary about the school for Radio 4 that was broadcast in November 2005:

... the girls adhere to a rigorous uniform code, discipline is strict and teachers are expected to instil Islamic virtues, like self-discipline, in their charges. At GCSE the girls do Arabic and Urdu rather than modern European languages and Islamic studies rather than religious education (RE). Music is seen as un-Islamic and there are no subjects you might recognise from a state secondary school curriculum like technology, drama or sociology.⁶

Feversham College, Bradford (p. 98)

Date of Ofsted inspection: 17 January 2008⁷

Name of reporting inspector: Jan Bennett

The Ofsted report states that 'Feversham College provides an outstanding education for its students' (p. 4); 'The school's support for students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent and the Islamic ethos permeates every aspect of the school.' (p. 4) 'Information and communication technology (ICT) is widely utilised across the curriculum... and a set of laptops is available for use in lessons. Students report they have very good access to ICT.' (p. 5)

[The website of Feversham College](#) links directly to islamworld.net which has a section on jihad. The essay by Hassan Al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, claims that: 'Jihad is an obligation from Allah on every Muslim... Allah associates warfare with prayer and fasting, establishing it as one of the pillars

of Islam... Those who do jihad are given [in the Qur'an] the good news of the magnificent reward that will be waiting for them... and involves all possible efforts that are necessary to dismantle the power of the enemies of Islam including beating them, plundering their wealth, destroying their places of worship and smashing their idols... Therefore prepare for jihad and be the lovers of death.' In *The Right to Judge* Sayyid Qutb writes that: 'It is not the function of Islam... to co-exist in the same land together with a jahili system ... Islam cannot accept any mixing with Jahiliyyah. Either Islam will remain, or Jahiliyyah, no half-way situation is possible... Allah's Shari'ah will prevail, or else people's desires.... The foremost duty of Islam is to depose Jahiliyyah from the leadership of man...' ['Jahiliyyah is the "state of ignorance"... used by fundamentalists to describe governments they regard as un-Islamic.']

The Feversham College website also links to al-islam.com, a site in Arabic, English and other languages which is operated by the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Da'wa, and Guidance (*Wizara al-shu'un al-islamiyya wa'l-awqaf wa'l-da'wa wa'l-irshad*). It carries an extensive collection of texts on jihad under the heading: '[The superiority of Jihad and moslem warriors \(Mujahideen\)](#)'.

There is no need for us to go on banging on this drum. But we have an important point to get across: some inspectors are missing the most crucial facts about the schools and writing glowing reports that might mislead the DCSF and the public. It's not their fault in

the least, since a close knowledge of Islamic doctrine and practice won't have figured in their training. One may ask harder questions about Muslim inspectors (notably Michèle Messaoudi, who has carried out 59 Ofsted inspections) who may have been expected to catch on a lot more quickly but who also present largely favourable reports.

Muslim Schools and Hate

In this report we have mustered a cohort of quotations illustrating views that fall into two loose categories. Some (the majority) represent a highly orthodox, traditionalist and fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, its texts and its personalities. They pass beyond the merely pious to the separatist, but do not move beyond that to the positively extreme. The second category is made up of statements that preach hatred, anti-Semitism, anti-Westernism, even support for jihadist violence.

Mercifully, the second group is much smaller than the former. As we have said more than once, our concern with so many of the schools we have examined has been separatism, anti-integrationism, and avoidance of Western norms, particularly those relevant to schools and schoolchildren.

One school, the [Jamia Al-Karam Secondary School](#), Retford, is closely linked to the Karam Scholars Association. Among the radicals belonging to this association is [Shaykh Yusuf ‘Abd al-Wahhab Abu Sneina](#), one of whose sermons contains the imprecation: ‘TV reports [show]... ugly massacres by the US and British invasion forces. This is a disgrace, God help our Muslim people in Iraq be victorious over the infidels... God destroy them all.’¹

A former teacher at al-Noor school, Ilford, [Abu Hasnayn Murtaza Khan](#), is hostile to Jews and Christians with equal vigour. On Audio CDs, such as *Return to the Quran* by Knowledge Books, he said: 'Those whom the wrath of Allah is upon, is the Jews, is the Christians.' He continued: 'We have become Jews in our clothing, Jews in our eating, Jews in everything that we do, and the other half is Christian in everything we do. Muslims are following one of these accursed nations. And people are still not waking up to understand the fact that these people are enemies towards us.'² He has further expressed his loathing for all non-Muslims in these terms: '[For how long do we have to see our mothers, sisters and daughters having to uncover themselves before these filthy non-Muslim doctors? We should have a sense of shame.](#)'³

There are two Islamic Shaksiyah Foundation schools, in Slough and Haringey, North London. The Foundation is a creation of female members of Hizb ut Tahrir, a radical Islamic organization that Tony Blair promised to ban following the 7/7 bombings. 'It is banned in Germany, Russia and throughout the Middle East because of its anti-semitism and its stated aim is to establish a global Islamic state. It also calls for the destruction of Israel and the re-union of all lands that were ever under Muslim rule—including parts of Southern Spain—through jihad if necessary'. The creator of the schools' history curriculum, Themina Ahmed, has written of her hatred for Western society, and her wish to see it destroyed: 'The world will', she writes, 'witness the death of the criminal capitalist

nation of America and all other [infidel] states when the army of jihad is unleashed upon them.’⁴

The website for al-Jamiah al-Islamiyyah Darul Uloom, Bolton, links directly to a large site (Ask-Imam) containing fatwas, run by South African imam Ebrahim Desai. Here is an example of what pupils may expect to find:

Islam has ordered us Muslims to fight against the enemies of Islam and not be like the Jew and make other nations fight their wars. We as Muslims may share in Hitlers hatreded [sic] for the Jews but we cannot praise him for the manner in which he went about killing the Jews (if the history books are correct).⁵

You should understand that we as Muslims firmly believe that the person who doesn't believe in Allah as he is required to, is a disbeliever who would be doomed to Hell eternally. Thus one of the primary responsibilities of the Muslim ruler is to spread Islam throughout the world, thus saving people from eternal damnation... if a country doesn't allow the propagation of Islam to its inhabitants in a suitable manner or creates hindrances to this, then the Muslim ruler would be justifying (*sic*) in waging Jihad against this country.⁶

The website of Feversham College, Bradford, a voluntary-aided comprehensive school for some 630 or so Muslim girls, links directly to islamworld.net, which has a section on its website on jihad.⁷ The links listed there are to writings by well-known Islamists such as Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood; Sayyid Qutb, the Brotherhood's leading intellectual and its most influential figure since his death in 1966; and Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, the effective head of

the Brotherhood today. Al-Qaradawi is the Qatar-based Muslim cleric to whom in February 2008 the Home Office denied entry to the UK out of fear his views 'could foster intercommunity violence'.⁸

According to Hassan al-Banna, writing in *Jihad*: 'Jihad is an obligation from Allah on every Muslim...'⁹ Allah associates warfare with prayer and fasting, establishing it as one of the pillars of Islam...¹⁰ Those who do jihad are given [in the Qur'an] the good news of the magnificent reward that will be waiting for them...¹¹ [Jihad] involves all possible efforts that are necessary to dismantle the power of the enemies of Islam including beating them, plundering their wealth, destroying their places of worship and smashing their idols.... It is fard (obligatory) on us to fight with the enemies... Today, my brother, the Muslims as you know are forced to be subservient before others and are ruled by disbelievers... Hence in this situation it becomes the duty of each and every Muslim to make jihad...¹² Nothing compares to the honour of *shahadah kubra* (the supreme martyrdom) or the reward that is waiting for the *mujahideen* ['those who strive or who undertake militant jihad for the faith; sometimes interpreted as "holy warriors"'¹³]... Therefore prepare for jihad and be the lovers of death.'¹⁴

Next, Sayyid Qutb, from *The Right to Judge*: 'It is not the function of Islam... to co-exist in the same land together with a jahili [pagan] system ... Islam's function is to bring people away from Jahiliyyah [paganhood] towards Islam... Islam cannot accept any mixing with Jahiliyyah. Either Islam will remain, or

Jahiliyyah, no half-way situation is possible... Allah's law will prevail, or else people's desires.... The foremost duty of Islam is to depose Jahiliyyah from the leadership of man...' ¹⁵ [‘Jahiliyyah is the “state of ignorance”... used by fundamentalists to describe governments and societies they regard as un-Islamic.’ ¹⁶]

Conclusion

There is nothing in this report that a genuinely moderate Muslim will not find disturbing, an offence to his or her faith. There is nothing that a well-integrated British Muslim will not find antipathetic or intimidating.

We have written this, not to attack Islam or offend moderate Muslims. Our report has been designed with one thing in mind—to help roll back the tide of fundamentalist and radical Islam from places where it deserves to exert no influence: the British educational system and British schools.

Our report stands up not just for British society and its integrity, but for all the young Muslims who are cajoled or bullied into adopting a way of life that reduces them to lookers-on in their own country. We have a duty to these children, and if the schools or their trusts or their boards of governors or their sponsors do not value that integrative duty, then our broader obligations to society overall must take precedence. The government, with its ministries, its inspectorates, and its powers of legislation will make better decisions about education than fundamentalists with axes to grind and lives to ruin.

We have said nothing to suggest that any Muslim school is a training ground for violent extremism. But there is evidence that young Muslims hold increasingly hardline and anti-Western views, with the 16- to 24-year-old group coming across as more alienated than their parents and grandparents.¹ To the extent that

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many Muslim schools enforce fundamentalist ideologies, they cannot be exempted from some measure of responsibility for the hardening of young people's attitudes.

It is here that possible connections to violence and jihadism become of real concern to society at large. Not all fundamentalists go on to become violent, and we have no wish to imply it. But all those who do become violent or preach violence start from a point at which they have been radicalised. No society can allow a trend towards violence to go without check.

Numerous schools betray no signs of holding anything but innocent views. However, a number cause concern simply because their fundamentalist views are such that pupils may be more likely to listen to the views of more hardline preachers or recruiters. This is something that needs to be looked into carefully by government and the security services.

It should be made clear that we distinguish between remarks, articles etc. made by people directly associated with a school, like teachers, governors, and trustees, and statements or rulings found at one remove, through a linked website or on a forum or by an individual who has been hosted by a school on one or more occasions. In a different context, this latter might seem to create guilt by association. The problem, as we have said elsewhere, is that we are dealing with schools. Mainstream schools do not invite representatives of the BNP or the IRA to speak, they do not make links to their websites on the school site, and they do not ask them to attend their prize days. Schools

have to be much more careful than other institutions in society not to expose those in their care to extremism, to hate speech, or to religious fanaticism. And it must be concluded that, if a school displays a preference for suspect individuals, the school itself cannot be averse to what they write or preach.

Do not some of the passages cited in this report reflect attitudes that seem to call for basic lessons in common sense and human dignity? No child raised in close contact to this kind of thinking has much hope of developing into a balanced British Muslim, someone with non-Muslim friends, perhaps a non-Muslim partner, a job in a mainstream place of work, love for English literature and international sport, and a freedom from neuroses that can only be addressed by backing away into the safe realm of the ghetto.

Let us be frank: if similar views were held by schoolteachers, headteachers, governors, or trustees of non-Muslim schools, we would expect an enquiry and a great many reforms. Yet Ofsted, not knowing where to look, provides most Muslim schools with a clean bill of health. There will indeed be good Muslim schools with good examination results. We have no wish to challenge that. But in some instances, these achievements may be offset by other considerations. What, one may ask, is the point in educating Muslim children partly according to the National Curriculum if, in the end, they have also been taught how to avoid life in a non-Muslim society?

We do not doubt that many Muslim schools pursue a positive approach with regard to inter-faith relations

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and integration. But others display the opposite tendency. Many have affiliations with fundamentalist groups and individuals. And many are deeply embedded within anti-integrationist movements. The relentless condemnation of Western society that they preach, and the rulings on keeping apart from the *kuffar*, do not make for easy reading in this regard.

There has been a growing notion that the Muslim community must be left to itself, a more or less tacit assumption that, if Muslims want to live in ghettos they should be allowed to get on with it. That is, in itself, highly divisive. When it concerns schools, a *laissez-faire* approach is irresponsible. There can be no compromise on how far any one community may go towards setting up a parallel society and educating its children to inhabit it exclusively.²

Government, government agencies, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Ofsted, the churches, the synagogues, educators, and anyone else involved in education have to tackle this problem head-on. Left to fester for years to come, it will only become unmanageable in the end. The recent proposal that imams should lead citizenship lessons in state schools³ should remain in mothballs until a reliable method can be found to distinguish moderate from extremist clerics, and only if it can be established that genuinely moderate imams are available. It is hard to think of seminaries where liberal Muslim ulama are trained, whether in the UK or abroad. Government may have to find new and better ways to work with the moderate Muslim laity, perhaps by providing

funding and facilities for new places of learning where a different kind of cleric can be trained.⁴

Denouncing this report will not make these problems go away. The representatives of the British Muslim community have to become more realistic and more proactive in dealing with problems within their own community. No one and no community is above criticism, and knee-jerk reactions that routinely throw criticism back against the critics only represent a self-defeating state of denial.

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Glossary

Ahadith Plural of hadith.

Ahmadis Also Qadiyanis. A Muslim sect dating from nineteenth-century India, considered heretical, especially in Pakistan. They are followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908), who claimed to be a prophet after Muhammad—a matter of extreme seriousness for orthodox Islam. Of the two factions among Ahmadis, the larger has its headquarters in London. Ahmadis reject the law of jihad.

Al-wala' wa'l-bara' Various translated, often as 'loyalty and enmity': loyalty to Islam and enmity to all that is non-Islam.

Barelwis A large section of the Indian and Pakistani Muslim community, generally contrasted with the Deobandis. Both groups are traditionalist and incorporate Sufism in their religious practice. But Barelwis engage in practices like the celebration of the Prophet's birthday, which the Deobandis consider idolatrous.

Da'wa Ar. 'call' or 'invitation'. Islamic missionary work directed at non-believers and backsliding Muslims. Also spelt **dawa**.

Darul Uloom (Ar. *Dar al-'ulum*, house of the sciences). A species of Islamic seminary following the pattern of the original Darul Uloom, established in 1866 in Deoband, India.

Deobandis A large religious affiliation among Indian and Pakistani Muslims, originating in the doctrines of

the original Darul Uloom at Deoband. Deobandism is a fundamentalist expression of Islam, and is immensely influential among Muslims in the UK.

Exclusive Brethren A puritanical evangelical group dating back to the 1840s. Brethren separate themselves from the rest of the world, work in their own businesses, inter-marry, and shun members who have left or been expelled. There are about 15,000 in the UK.

Fatwa A ruling on a matter of religious law (shari'a).

Fiqh (Ar. understanding) The study of Islamic law, jurisprudence.

Hadith Ar., a narration. An account of a saying or doing of Muhammad or his companions (in relation to him). There are six canonical collections of narrations (pl. *ahadith*), of which two from the late ninth century, the *Sahih al-Bukhari* and the *Sahih Muslim* are considered completely authentic.

Hafiz Someone who has committed the entire Qur'an to heart.

Halal Anything that is permissible under shari'a law (cf. haram). In all, there are five categories of things and actions: permissible, approved, basic, disapproved, and forbidden.

Haram Anything that is forbidden under shari'a law.

Hifz Memorization of the Qur'an.

Hijab Ar. 'covering'. A general term for a woman's dress that involves, minimally, covering everything but

her face and hands. Many Muslim women in the West wear a headscarf, others a khimar (a much longer headscarf), and increasing numbers wear a face veil as well, in the form of a niqab.

Hizb ut Tahrir More correctly, Hizb al-Tahrir, ‘the liberation party’, a religio-political movement founded by Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani in 1953. The party aims to unite all Muslims under a single Caliphate, reviving the religious leadership of Islam that was abolished in 1924 under Atatürk. The party has been accused of ambitions to fight a jihad to help bring the Caliphate about. Also spelt **Hizb al-Tahrir**, **Hizbut Tahrir**. A *hizbi* is NOT a member of the HuT, but someone who promotes factionalism.

Ikhwan ‘Brethren’. This refers to at least two Muslim groups. The first were the Wahhabi Ikhwan who unleashed a reign of terror in Saudi Arabia, killing anyone who did not match up to Wahhabi standards. The more common use today is for members of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Jamaat-e Islami A religio-political movement founded in 1941 by Abu’l A’la Mawdudi (1903-79), the leading Indian exponent of fundamentalist, Wahhabi-like Islam.

Jihad Ar. ‘struggle’. An armed struggle for the spread or defence of Islam. There are several secondary meanings, including *jihad al-nafs* or the struggle with the self. See also *mujahid*.

Kafir Ar. pl. *kuffar*. Non-Muslims.

Kufr Ar. unbelief.

Madrasa Strictly speaking, a madrasa (Ar., place of learning) is a seminary for teenagers and men seeking to become religious scholars ('ulama). In the UK, the term is generally used for extra-curricular schools for children, in which mainly Qur'anic subjects are taught. Such schools are more correctly referred to as maktabas (or, in Egypt and elsewhere, *kuttab*s). Also spelt **madrassa**, **madrassah**, **medersa**.

Maulana (Ar. our lord), an honorific for a religious scholar, most used in India and Pakistan, especially by Deobandis. It is similar to the mainly Iranian term Mulla and the Turkish Mevlana.

Mufti The word is from the same Arabic root as fatwa. A mufti is someone who issues fatwas, deciding on an interpretation of a point of law.

Muhtamim The principal or vice-chancellor of a Darul Uloom.

Mujahid Ar. pl. *mujahidun/in* (cf. Mujahideen). A fighter in the holy war (*jihad*).

Muslim Brotherhood Ar. al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun. An Islamist movement founded in Egypt in 1928 by a schoolteacher, Hasan al-Banna'. It has spread worldwide and continues to have great influence. Its ideologue in the 1950s and 60s, Sayyid Qutb (hanged 1966) advocated violence against both non-Muslims

(especially Jews) and erring Muslims. His ideas have been seminal in the creation of modern Islamism.

Qur'an The Muslim holy book, considered the literal word of God and God's final revelation to mankind. It is correctly spelled with an apostrophe, as here.

Salafis Salafism is a fundamentalist movement within Islam that began in the 1920s and has gathered pace since then. Its beliefs are based on the concept of the Salaf, the first three generations of Muslims, whose purity of faith and practice form a model for the perfect society. Salafis, therefore, base their Islam solely on the Qur'an and the Ahadith.

SAW Often placed after the name of the Prophet, as a reproduction of the Arabic *sala 'llah 'alayhi wa sallam*, 'May God bless him and give him peace'.

Sharh A commentary or explanation.

Shari'a Islamic law, representing rulings based on the Qur'an and Hadith, together with the findings of later scholars using methods such as qiyas or analogical reasoning. Shari'a law covers matters of worship, personal status, family, commerce, the treatment of non-Muslims, holy war, inheritance, taxes, criminal law, and much else besides. Also spelt: **shareeah**, **sharee'ah**.

Shaykh (Ar., old man) An honorific term for a religious scholar, usually with a leaning towards the Arab world, but used widely now in the UK by Salafis,

Wahhabis, etc. Also **shaikh**, **sheikh**. Pls. *shuyukh*, *mashayikh*, *ashyakh*, *mashyakha*.

Tablighi Jamaat The Jamaat is an offshoot of Deobandism, established in the late 1920s in India by Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi. It is a missionary organization (possibly the largest in the world) active in some 80 countries.

Tafsir A commentary on the Qur'an.

Tajwid From the Arabic root *jad*, 'to improve'. Recitation of the Qur'an according to set rules of pronunciation and intonation.

Ulama Ar. 'ulama', sg. 'alim. The body of scholars who make up the Islamic clerical establishment. Apart from the Shi'ite clerical establishment in Iran and the clerics in Saudi Arabia, the 'ulama do not constitute a formal hierarchy like that of the Christian clergy. They perform no sacerdotal functions.

Wahhabism A puritanical religious movement founded in the late eighteenth century by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92), who allied himself with the Al Sa'ud.¹ A brief period of Sa'udi-Wahhabi rule was followed by defeat and a loss of power until the twentieth century, when the alliance created the Kingdom of Sa'udi Arabia. The country today is ruled by a combination of the monarchy and the religious establishment.

¹ The word 'Al' here (with a long 'a') is not the definite article 'the', but 'family' or 'clan'.

Appendix

Grades One and Two of an exhaustive Islamic curriculum devised by IBERR (The International Board of Educational Research and Resources)²

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Amended Syllabus

Primary School - High School 2002

The International Board of Educational Research and Resources (IBERR)

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The syllabus is intended to:-

1. awaken in students a consciousness (Taqwa) and love of Allah and His Messenger as the foundation of their intellectual, emotional and spiritual life, thereby providing a sound basis for rational and reflective understanding of the people and world around them;
2. teach students to be conscious of their responsibility to obey Allah, serving Him actively as trustees (Khalifas) with all the talents and resources He has given them;

2 This long list has not been tampered with. It is worth noting that here (as elsewhere) there is repeated use of Arabic terminology (sometimes inaccurately). Most of these terms are susceptible of an English equivalent.

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3. enable students to fulfill their obligation to worship Allah in the manner He and His Messenger have prescribed;
4. nurture the student's personality towards the best moral and social conduct, healthy attitudes and self-discipline, in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'aan and Sunnah and to encourage them to develop as responsible citizens, who will contribute to the well-being of society and of humanity in general;
5. promote an enquiring, analytical and positive approach to the study of Islam, especially in its individual and collective expression in the contemporary world;
6. introduce students to the challenging and multi-faceted nature of Islam and to the ways in which this is reflected in experiences and practices;
7. help students to identify and explore questions about the meaning of life and to consider such questions in relation to the values and teachings of Islam;
8. encourage students to reflect on contemporary issues and act thereon in the light of the Qur'aan and Sunnah; and
9. enable students to recognise, appreciate and add to the contribution of Muslims to world civilization.

The curriculum for Grades One and Two

GRADE ONE

1. Qur'ān Reading Students will be taught Qur'ānic Arabic reading skills using appropriate materials and activities suitable for their age and aptitude.

2. Memorization with meaning

2.1 Surahs 2.1.1 Al-Fātiha 2.1.2 An-Nās

2.1.3 Al-Asr 2.1.4 Al-Kauthar 2.1.5 Al-Ikhlās

2.1.6 Quraish 2.1.7 An Nasr

2.2 Duas (Supplications) & Expressions

2.2.1 Declaration of Faith (Kalimatu-Tayyibah+Shahādah)

2.2.2 Seeking refuge with Allah (Ta'awwuz)

2.2.3 Saying Bismillah... (Tasmiyah)

2.2.4 Greeting 2.2.5 Thanking

2.2.6 After sneezing 2.2.7 Before and after

eating 2.2.8 Before and after sleeping

2.2.10 Before entering and after leaving the toilet

2.2.11 Asma ul Husna (33 Names)

3. Aqīdah

3.1 Allah's attributes 3.1.1 Allah's Kingdom.

3.1.2 Allah is the One (Al-Ahad).

3.1.3 Allah is the Creator (Al-Khaliq). • Animals and plants. • The universe. • Man

3.1.4 Allah is the Rabb (Lord and Sustainer).

3.1.5 Allah is the Giver of Life (Al-Muhyi).

3.1.6 Allah is the All-Knowing (Al-Aleem).

3.1.7 Allah is the All-Seeing (Al-Baseer).

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- 3.1.8 Allah is the All-Hearing (Al-Sami').
- 3.1.9 Allah is the All-Loving (Al-Wadood).
- 3.1.10 Allah is the Most Merciful and the Most Kind (Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim).
- 3.1.11 Allah is the Forgiving (Al-Ghafoor).
- 3.2 Declaration of Faith (Kalimatush Shahadah+ Tayyibah).
- 3.3 Beliefs. 3.3.1 Allah.
- 3.3.2 His Angels (especially Jibril AS).
- 3.3.3 His Books. 3.3.4 His Messengers. 3.4 How to get closer to Allah.

4. Akhlaq

- 4.1 Respect For 4.1.1 Allah
- 4.1.2 Rasulullah (SAW) 4.1.3 Parents
- 4.1.4 Teachers 4.2 Allah Loves: 4.2.1 Love & Kindness 4.2.2 Sharing 4.2.3 The truthful and honest 4.2.4 Work and self-help 4.3 Allah does not Love: 4.3.1 Cheating 4.3.2 Stealing 4.3.3 Bad Manners 4.3.4 Lying 4.4 Etiquettes: 4.4.1 Thanking 4.4.2 Greeting 4.4.3 Eating 4.4.4 Sleeping 4.4.5 Bathroom 4.5 Care for the Environment 4.5.1 Beautiful World

5. Seerah and History

- 5.1 Seerah. 5.1.1 Life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).
- 5.2 Ambiya 5.2.1 Prophet Adam (AS) and Haw-wā (AS) and the enmity of Shaytan. 5.2.2 Prophet Nuh (AS). 5.2.3 Prophet Sulaiman (AS). 5.2.4 Prophet Ibrahim (AS). 5.2.5 Prophet Isma'il (AS).

MUSIC, CHESS AND OTHER SINS

5.3 Young Sahaabah (RA) 5.3.1 Husain ibn Ali (RA) 5.3.2 Usamah ibn Zaid (RA) 5.4 Islamic Legacy 5.4.1 Masjidul Haraam 5.4.2 Masjidun Nabawi 5.4.3 Masjidul Aqsa

6. Fiqh

6.1 Cleanliness (Tahārah). 6.1.1 Istinja. 6.1.2 Wudhu (plus practical demonstration). 6.1.3 Practical Ghusl
6.2 Salāh (practical demonstration).
6.3 Sawm (Brief, general description).
6.4 Zakah (Brief, general description).
6.5 Hajj (Brief, general description).
6.6 Festivals 6.6.1 Eid-ul-Fitr (Brief, general description). 6.6.2 Eid-ul-Adha (Brief, general description).

GRADE TWO

1. Qur'ān Reading

Students will be taught Qur'ānic Arabic reading skills using appropriate materials and activities suitable for their age and aptitude.

2. Memorization with meaning

2.1 Surahs 2.1.1 Al-Fil 2.1.2 Al-Lahab 2.1.3 Al-Falaq
2.1.4 Al-Ma'un 2.1.5 Al-Kāfirūn
2.2 Duas (Supplications) & Expressions
2.2.1 Kalimah Tamjeed 2.2.2 Kalimah Tawheed
2.2.3 Kalimah Radde Kufr 2.2.4 When receiving good news 2.2.5 When receiving bad news

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- 2.2.6 When intending to do anything
- 2.2.7 Tasbihat of ruku and sujood
- 2.2.8 Thana 2.2.9 Before and after Wudhu
- 2.2.10 Imān-e-Mujmal
- 2.2.11 Imān-e-Mufasssal 2.2.12 Asma ul Husna (33 Names)

3. Aqīdah

- 3.1 Allah's attributes 3.1.1 Allah the Creator (Al-Khaliq). 3.1.2 Allah the Most Merciful, the Most Kind (Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim). 3.1.3 Allah the Provider (Ar-Razzaq). 3.1.4 Allah the Helper 3.1.5 Allah the Powerful 3.1.6 Glorification of Allah
- 3.2 Beliefs. 3.2.1 Angels of Allah (Names & functions of Jibril & Mikail AS). 3.2.2 Books of Allah (and to whom they were sent). 3.2.3 Messengers of Allah (Purposes, names of the Prophets AS mentioned in the Qur'an). 3.2.4 The Day of Raising 3.2.5 Relationship between man and Allah.
- 3.3 Allah Awareness: how to get closer to Allah.

4. Akhlaq

- 4.1. Respect For: 4.1.1 Parents 4.1.2 Family – Relatives 4.1.3 All people 4.1.4 Friends 4.1.5 Guests 4.1.6 Teachers
- 4.2 Allah Loves 4.2.1 Gratitude 4.2.2 Kindness 4.2.3 Obedience 4.2.4 Speaking the truth 4.2.5 Fulfilment of promises
- 4.3 Allah does not love: 4.3.1 Rudeness 4.3.2 Mockery 4.3.3 Nicknames 4.3.4 Stealing 4.4. Etiquette

4.4.1 Speaking 4.4.2 Eating 4.4.3 Play 4.4.4 Clothes
4.4.5 Justice 4.4.6 Mosque
4.5. Care for the Environment 4.5.1 Masjid 4.5.2 Home
4.5.3 Surrounding

5. Seerah & History

5.1 Seerah. 5.1.1 Summary of the life of Prophet
Muhammad (SAW). 5.2 Ambiya. 5.1.1 Prophet Musa
(AS). 5.1.2 Prophet Yunus (AS). 5.1.3 Prophet Haroon
(AS). 5.1.4 Prophet Dawood (AS). 5.3 Sahaabah.
5.3.1 Abdullah ibn Abbas (RA) 5.3.2 Abu Hurairah
(RA) 5.3.3 Khadija (RA) 5.4 Islamic Legacy
5.4.1 Umayyad Masjid (Syria) 5.4.2 Blue Masjid (Turkey)
5.4.3 Muhammad Ali Masjid (Cairo)

6. Fiqh

6.1 Cleanliness (Tahārah). 6.1.1 Istinja (Brief
description). 6.1.2 Wudhu (definition of pure water).
6.2 Salāh (practical demonstration). 6.2.1 Names of the
five daily Salāh, time and number of rak'ah of each.
6.3 Sawm . 6.3.1 What is Sawm. 6.3.2 How to observe
Sawm.
6.4 Hajj. 6.4.1 When it is performed and where it is
performed.
6.5 Zakah. 6.5.1 Who pays Zakah. 6.5.2 When 6.6 Hijri
calendar. 6.6.1 Names of the months.

Notes

Summary

- 1 ICM, [Guardian Muslim poll](#), March 2004.
- 2 This figure dropped to 18 per cent in an ICM poll carried out the following year, in 2005. ICM, [Guardian Muslim Poll, July 2005](#). At the same time, 58 per cent (61 per cent of under-34s) blamed Tony Blair for the 7/7 bombings. A fresh poll is obviously necessary.
- 3 Jon Snow, '[Muslim integration has come to a halt](#)', *The Times*, 6 August 2006.
- 4 Donald MacLeod, '[Faith schools "help foster terrorists"](#)', *Guardian*, 9 September 2008.
- 5 '[Close extremist schools – Kelly](#)', *BBC News*, 27 August 2006.

Introduction

- 1 A useful year-by-year [list of facts and statistics](#) concerning faith schools is available from the British Humanist Association.
- 2 Kamal Ahmed, '[80 per cent are against new faith schools: Observer poll finds Blair plan more unpopular than rail privatisation and poll tax](#)', *Observer*, 11 November 2001.
- 3 Matthew Taylor, '[Two thirds oppose state aided faith schools](#)', *The Guardian*, 23 August 2005.
- 4 Graeme Paton, *Telegraph*, 11 September 2007.
- 5 Anthea Lipsett, '[MPs to voice concerns over faith schools](#)', *Education Guardian*, 2 January 2008.
- 6 Cited John Crace, '[Non-believers](#)', *Guardian*, 5 December 2006.
- 7 Crace, '[Non-believers](#)', p. 2.

- 8 Crace, 'Non-believers', p. 1.
- 9 *Muslims on Education: A Position Paper*, Association of Muslim Social Scientists, Richmond, 2004.
- 10 Polly Curtis, 'Teachers lack faith in Muslim schools', *Guardian*, 9 June 2004.
- 11 Cited Curtis 'Teachers lack faith.
- 12 Cited Curtis, 'Teachers lack faith.
- 13 Cited Liz Lightfoot, 'Muslim schools accused of 'undermining our society'', *Telegraph*, 19 January 2005.
- 14 Polly Curtis, 'Union calls for end to single-faith schools,' *The Guardian*, 25 March 2008.
- 15 Crace, 'Non-believers', p. 1.
- 16 For a list, go to:
<http://www.mavensearch.com/schools/C3382/>
- 17 David Marley, 'Buddhists plan first state school', *Times Educational Supplement*, 27 June 2008.
- 18 An offshoot from a 19th-century Christian sect, the Plymouth Brethren, since 1848. There are over 40,000 mainstream Exclusive Brethren worldwide, plus some other groups. The Brethren do not integrate with society at large.
- 19 Graeme Paton, 'Official backing for the Brethren', *Times Educational Supplement*, 12 August 2005.
- 20 An incomplete list of 67 schools is provided by the [Association of Muslim Schools](#). A fuller list of 86 UK schools is supplied by the [al-Birr Foundation](#). The longest is the list of 120 schools at [UKIEW](#) (UK Islamic Education Waqf [Trust]).

NOTES

- 21 For a critical study of the educational system in Pakistan, see Pervez Hoodbhoy, 'What are they teaching in Pakistani schools today?', 15 April 2000, *Chowk*, at: <http://www.chowk.com/articles/4740>
- 22 Sahib Mustaqim Bleher, 'A Programme for Muslim Education in a Non-Muslim Society', in *Issues in Islamic Education*, London, Muslim Educational Trust, 1996.
- 23 Comparative figures for 2001 are: 5,098,930 Christian, 82,952 Hindu, 62,237 Sikh, and 33,292 Jewish children. In 2005, there were 1,710,400 pupils in maintained Christian schools, 1,770 in maintained Muslim schools, 14,670 in Jewish schools, and 640 in Sikh schools. (DfES, *Faith in the System*, 2007, pp. 3-4).
- 24 See: ONS, *Focus on Religion*, Education, 11 October 2004.
- 25 DCSF, *Faith in the System: the role of schools with a religious character in English education and society*, 2007, pp. 3-4.
- 26 Muslim Council of Britain, *Meeting the Needs of Muslim Pupils in State Schools: Information and Guidance for Schools*, 2007, p. 7. For a very detailed statistical and general survey of Muslim children, their background, and their place within the education system, see *British Muslims and Education*, The Open Society Institute, especially sections 3, 4, and 5.
- 27 Sarah Cassidy, 'Do Muslim children in faith schools do better than in state schools?', *Independent*, 19 January 2006. See also Dominic Casciani, 'Q&A: Faith schools and quotas', *BBC News*, 31 October 2006.
- 28 'Q&A: Muslim schools: How many full-time Muslim schools are there in England?', *BBC News*, 7 February 2007.

- 29 For a shallow account of the seven madrasas in Redbridge, see Redbridge Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education, *Muslim Madrasahs in Redbridge*, Briefing Paper 4 (London: Borough of Redbridge, 2003).
- 30 Alexandra Smith, 'Call for national register of mosque schools', *Guardian*, 22 March 2006.
- 31 'SSA, CAP Foundation tie up on SSA in Madrasas', *One India*.
- 32 B. Raman, 'Bangladesh: A Seeming Crackdown', *South Asia Analysis Group*, 2 March 2005.
- 33 Katherine Zoepf, 'Islamic Revival in Syria Is Led by Women', *New York Times*, 29 August 2006.
- 34 For an excellent summary of the situation of 'supplementary schools', see Open Society Institute, *British Muslims in Education*, Quest Foundation, n.d..
- 35 The correct plural forms are *Dur al-Ulum* and *Diyar al-Ulum* (Durul Uloom, Diyarul Uloom), but these are likely to confuse the non-Arabist, so we have adopted a rather clumsy English plural.
- 36 This word has acquired several spellings in English transliteration (madrasa, madrasah, madrassa, madressa, madrassah, madressah, medersa). The first and second are both correct, although most modern academics would use the first in preference.
- 37 *Ahadith* is the correct Arabic plural of *hadith*, a record of a saying or deed of the Prophet, valued as an authority next to the Qur'an.
- 38 Syed Sajjad Husain, 'Islamising University Education: problems and prospects', *Issues in Islamic Education*, London, Muslim Educational Trust, 1996.

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- 39 At least 22 have been inspected by Michèle Mesaoudi, a Muslim active in most areas of Islamic education. . She was on the Board of Trustees of FAIR, the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism and is a 'scholar' on Sharia TV, many of whose panelists are Salafis.
- 40 See Alexandra Blair, '[Muslim schools give the greatest added value](#)', *The Times*, 19 January 2006, at; Sarah Cassidy, '[Muslim girls' school leads the way](#)', *Independent*, 13 January 2005.
- 41 Sandie Schagen, Deborah Davies, Peter Rudd, and Ian Schagen, *Impact of specialist and faith schools*, National Foundation for Educational Research, 2002. Ian and Sandie Schagen have summarized this research in 'The impact of faith schools on pupil performance', in Roy Gardner, Jo Cairns, and Denis Lawton (eds), *Faith Schools: Consensus or Conflict*, London, 2004.

1: Moderates and Extremists

- 1 In fact, Jon Gower Davies has just written an intelligent analysis of this issue, forthcoming later this year: *The Search for the Moderate Muslim*, London, Social Affairs Unit, 2009 (forthcoming).
- 2 For an example of a preacher (Abdullah al-Faisal) who had been jailed in the UK for incitement to murder, later visiting a Muslim boarding school for boys in Durban, South Africa, see Daniel Sandford, '[Hate preacher who "knew 7/7 bomber"](#)', *BBC News*, 21 June 2008.
- 3 Prof. Audrey Osler, *Faith Schools and Community Cohesion: Observations on Community Consultations*, London, 2007.
- 4 Here again, see Ed Husain, *The Islamist*, London, 2007.

- 5 'Koran and Country: How Islam Got Political'
- 6 Salman Rushdie, 'Where is the honour in this vile code that condemns women to die in shame?', *The Times*, 18 July 2005.
- 7 According to a report by Professor Anthony Glee, Director of Brunel University's Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, 'Eight universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, have accepted more than £233.5 million from Saudi and Muslim sources since 1995, with much of the money going to Islamic study centres'. See Ben Leach, '"Extremism" fear over Islam studies donations', *The Telegraph*, 14 April 2008; Anthea Lipsett, 'Concerns over funding of Islamic studies', *The Guardian*, 17 April 2008, at: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/universityfunding/story/0,,2273940,00.html>; for a different report touching on this, see Dr. Ataullah Siddiqui, *Islam at Universities in England: Meeting the Needs and Investing in the Future*, presented to the Minister for Higher Education, 10 April 2007.
- 8 'Aafaq Editor-in-Chief Omran Salman: Saudi Arabia Has Squandered Opportunity to Renew its Aging Political System', *Memri*, 17 July, 2008. For the original Arabic report, see http://www.aafaq.org/search_details.aspx?id_arch=11409.
- 9 'Aafaq Editor-in-Chief'. Arabic original on al-Fawzan's own website at: <http://www.alfawzan.ws/AlFawzan/Home/tabid/36/Default.aspx>.
- 10 See 'Saudi textbook controversy' at: Nina Shea, 'This is a Saudi textbook. (After the intolerance was removed.)', *Washington Post*, 21 May 2006; Johann Hari, 'We all fund this torrent of Saudi bigotry', *The Independent*, 8 February, 2007. For a full report on textbooks identified in the US, see the Freedom House report, 'Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of

[Intolerance](#)'. The UK situation will be discussed later in this report.

- 11 On the updated report from the Hudson Institute and the Center for Religious Freedom, see: Nick Curran, '[Saudi kids learn the darndest things about killing Jews and gays](#)', *Radar*, 16 July 2008; <http://tinyurl.com/6z448a> ; '[New Report Shows Saudi Ministry Textbooks Still Teach Extreme Intolerance](#)', *MarketWatch (Wall Street Journal)*, 15 July 2008. For the new report, see Center for Religious Freedom of the Hudson Institute, *2008 Update: Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance*. For original Arabic excerpts with translations, go to: <http://www.hudson.org/religion>. See the [Saudi Ministry of Education](#) Arabic-language site from which materials were obtained.

2: Social Cohesion

- 1 Text of speech available at :
<http://www.cre.gov.uk/Default.aspx?LocID-0hgnew07s.RefLocID-0hg00900c002.Lang-EN.htm>
- 2 For their final report go:
http://integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Our_final_report.aspx
- 3 On faith schools, see pp. 116ff.
- 4 Annex C: Our response to the DfES on the Duty to Promote Cohesion, p.155 ff.
- 5 For reports, see BBC News feature at:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/uk/2001/summer_of_violence/default.stm.
- 6 Director of the Karimia Institute (Nottingham;
<http://www.karimia.com/>) and an adviser to the Muslim Council of Britain.

- 7 Association of Muslim Social Scientists UK, [Muslim Education in Europe Conference](#), 27-29 September 2002, p. 36.
- 8 Al-Awlaki is a Yemeni-American imam who has written and spoken widely. He runs a popular [website](#) which includes two lectures entitled 'Allah is preparing us for victory [over the unbelievers]'.
<http://tinyurl.com/5puc4q> Lightly edited.
- 9 <http://as-sabiqoon.com/forum/index.php?topic=3734.0>
- 11 Quoted Jan Jun, 'U.K.: Asian Muslim Ghettos Keep Growing, Hindering Integration', *Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty*, 5 July 2008.
- 12 David Adam, 'UK Asians isolated in city enclaves', *Guardian*, 1 September 2005.
- 13 See Ron Johnston, James Forrest, Michael Poulsen, 'Are there Ethnic Enclaves/Ghettos in English Cities?', *Urban Studies*, 39:4, 2002, pp. 591-618.
- 14 Cited Jan Jun, 'Asian Muslim ghettos'.
- 15 Torin Douglas, 'A Muslim 'digital ghetto'?', *BBC News*, 16 August 2006.
- 16 Feversham College (Bradford) has a link to: <http://www.a2youth.com> (self-described as 'the youth's resource to Islam'); Jamea'ah Girls Academy (Leicester) has a link to a website named 'Khanaqah Imam Muhammad Zakana' which was advertising a 'Spiritual Retreat' to be held in Leicester on 24/12-26/12/08 and which lists as among the 'invited speakers and ulama in residence' at the retreat Riyadhul Haq. The Jamea'ah Girls' Academy also has a link to 'Darul Iftaa' (Institute of Islamic Jurisprudence); Taheedul Islam Girls High School (Blackburn) has a link entitled 'For Young People's Directory' which goes to a website

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- (www.urbwd.com) which calls itself “Everything you need in one place” and which offers a click on onto a directory called “Young People”; Markazul-Uloom-Al-Islamiyya (Rotherham) has links to Inter Islam and to Shariah Institute. The Islamic Tarbiyah Academy (Dewsbury) has a link to Darul uloom, Deoband (India).
- 17 Bob Roberts, ‘[Labour: we’ll break up Islamic ghettos](#)’, *The Mirror*, 3 April 2008; ‘[Ban Muslim ghettos, says Cameron](#)’, *This is London*, 4 October 2006.
 - 18 For a full history of Muslims in the UK, see Humayun Ansari, *The Infidel Within: The History of Muslims in Britain, 1800 to the Present*, London, 2004. For a dated (1994) but in-depth study focussing on Bradford, see Philip Lewis, *Islamic Britain: Religion, politics, and identity among British Muslims*, London, re-issued 2002.
 - 19 Cited Jun, ‘Asian Muslim Ghettos Keep Growing’. Deobandi reference in e-mail to the present author, 6 July 2008.
 - 20 By far the most exciting example of this is the King David School in Birmingham, a state primary 50 per cent of whose pupils are Muslims. Some of the Muslims wear *kippas*, they eat kosher food, and learn Hebrew prayers and songs. There is a high level of harmony that lasts into adulthood. See Jonathan Margolis, ‘[The Jewish school where half the pupils are Muslim](#)’, *Independent*, 1 February 2007.
 - 21 In April 2008, the home secretary, Jacqui Smith, announced a revised estimate for the number of Muslims living in the UK, two million, up from 1.6 million in 2001. This puts Muslims at 3.3 per cent of the UK population. Alan Travis, ‘[Officials think UK’s Muslim population has risen to 2m](#)’, *Guardian*, 8 April 2008.

- 22 'Avoid "harmful forms of music" in state schools says Muslim Council', *Freemuse*, 22 February 2007, at: <http://www.freemuse.org/sw17513.asp>.
- 23 Graeme Paton, 'Number of faith schools set to rise dramatically', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 September 2007.
- 24 The Madrasah al-Zahra, Walthamstow [had a link from its website to that of the Deen Forum](#) — 'created to unite Muslim students from all over the world' — at the time of writing. [The school now has a new website](#) that no longer carries the link.
- 25 al-Mu'min, Bradford.
- 26 The Darul Uloom, Bury, on its Inter-Islam site: http://www.inter-islam.org/Prohibitions/Mansy_music.htm
- 27 Dr Mahmood Chandia, a graduate of the Darul Uloom, Bury, quoted in Norfolk, A., 'Hardline takeover of British mosques', *The Times*, 7 September 2008; <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article2402973.ece>
- 28 For a picture of how a young Muslim, brought up in a traditional but moderate family was gradually radicalized, see Ed Husain, *The Islamist*, London, 2007.
- 29 This was originally the University of Islamabad until its renaming in 1976.
- 30 Pervez Amirali Hoodbhoy, '[Science and the Islamic world – The quest for rapprochement](#)', *Physics Today*, August 2007. For more detailed examinations of the problem by the same author, see P. Hoodbhoy, *Islam and Science – Religious Orthodoxy and the Battle for rationality*, London, 1991; also as: *Islam and Science: Coexistence and Conflict*.

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- 31 Based on the 56 nations represented by the Organization of the Islamic Conference.
- 32 The OIC is the largest international body of Muslim states. Founded in 1971, it rejected the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and adopted Islamic (*shari'a*) law as the basis for its constitution. It has 56 member states.
- 33 Hoodbhoy, p. 52
- 34 Hoodbhoy, pp. 53-54. Note how many schools on our list advance the theories of Harun Yahya, a Turkish Islamist and Creationist, who purveys a range of anti-scientific superstitions.
- 35 Hoodbhoy, p. 55
- 36 See:
http://www.topuniversities.com/university_rankings/results/2008/overall_rankings/fullrankings/
- 37 Muslim Council of Britain, *Meeting the Needs of Muslim Pupils in State Schools*: Information and Guidance for Schools, London, 2007, p. 14.
- 38 Office of National Statistics, *Annual Population Survey*, January 2004 to December 2004.
- 39 Office of National Statistics, *Annual Population Survey*, January 2004 to December 2004.
- 40 Office of National Statistics, *Annual Population Survey*, January 2004 to December 2004.
- 41 Jonathan Wynne-Jones and Martin Beckford, 'Muslim Parents to blame for children turning to extremism', *Telegraph*, 11 June 2008.
- 42 The Islamic calendar is lunar, which means that months progress through the solar year.

- 43 The Muslim Educational Trust, '[Comments on the Government White Paper. Schools: Achieving Success](#)', 5 November 2001.
- 44 For a powerful evocation of how someone can break out of (yet remain faithful to) a strict religious tradition to achieve greatness, see the remarkable novel *My Name is Asher Lev* by Chaim Potok (New York, 1973).

3: The Muslim Curriculum and the National Curriculum

- 1 Defensive education to ensure children are made proof against Western civilization is not confined to Europe. In Kuwait, a range of religious summer camps aims to 'protect [the youths] from Western culture'. Fatima Dashti, 'Religious Summer Camps—Brainwashing, Not Entertainment', *al-Jarida*, (Kuwait), 13 June 2008, summarized and cited '[Kuwaiti Columnist on Brainwashing in Religious Summer Camps](#)', Middle East Media Research Institute.
- 2 This was the London School of Islamics, which operated from 1981 to 2006. The school still functions from a [website](#). The site contains an article by Ahmad, in which he condemns the idea of multi-faith schools and insists on separate schools for Muslims, with teachers brought in from abroad. He proposes that all Muslim-majority state schools be turned into Muslim schools. Another section contains a discussion about Islamic schools, in which several commentators express deep unhappiness with Western education.
- 3 Iftikhar Ahmad, '[The needs of Muslim children can be met only through Muslim schools](#),', *Guardian*, 22 May 2002.
- 4 Available at :
<http://www.mcb.org.uk/downloads/Schoolinfo guidance.pdf>.

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- 5 In fact, only the eating of pork is disallowed in the Qur'an.
- 6 See James Brandon and Salam Hafez, *Crimes of the Community: Honour-based violence in the UK*. London, 2008, available at:
<http://www.socialcohesion.co.uk/pdf/CrimesOfTheCommunity.pdf>.
- 7 See:
<http://www.muftisays.com/qa.php?viewpage=viewQA&question=1954>.
- 8 A fatwa is simply a ruling on an aspect of Islamic law, ranging from worship to marital relations to economics to criminal acts. Following a traditional pattern, online fatwa sites allow individuals to post questions which the mufti (a legally trained issuer of fatwas) answers. Both questions and answers are recorded for future benefit.
- 9 A former Registrar of the controversial King Fahad Academy, London.
- 10 Assistant Headteacher at the King Fahad Academy.
- 11 Principal of Brondesbury College.
- 12 http://www.tawhid.org.uk/art_policy_december2006.pdf.
- 13 President of the [International Institute of Islamic Thought](#) (IIIT).
- 14 An adjective from the noun *tawhid*, the divine oneness.
- 15 Rosnani Hashim, '[Islamization of the Curriculum](#)', *Islam Online*, 6 December 2004.
- 16 *Community Cohesion*, 6.8.3, p. 33.
- 17 '4.4.2 Within other subjects, there lie some problems. For example, the teaching of Arts & Crafts may bring the student

into contact with inappropriate forms of sculpture or with paintings whose subject matter is similarly in conflict with Islamic values. Some literature might encompass material that promotes inappropriate morality. In addition the use of certain musical instruments may be looked upon unfavourably by some Muslim parents.'

- 18 The reference here is probably to the concept of 'revealed knowledge', as provided by the Qur'an. The Qur'an is considered an infallible text that provides the most certain knowledge.
- 19 For a detailed account of how IBERR came into being, see http://iberr.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=5.
- 20 The use of apostrophes here is deeply significant. For over fifty years now, Muslim radicals have been arguing that most Muslim countries are really lands of unbelief that have to be brought back to Islam.
- 21 The corpus of the recorded sayings and doings of the Prophet (sg. *hadith*).
- 22 In *Issues in Islamic Education*, the Muslim Educational Trust, n.d., p. 72.
- 23 Bleher, 'A Programme for Muslim Education'.
- 24 In *Issues in Islamic Education*, the Muslim Educational Trust, n.d., p. 75.
- 25 See Denis MacEoin, *The Hijacking of British Islam*, London, Policy Exchange, 2007, especially pp. 51-58.
- 26 Convened as part of the National Dialogue by the Saudi monarch. Dankowitz, Aluma. "Saudi Study Offers Critical Analysis of the Kingdom's Religious Curricula." MEMRI, No. 195, 9 November 2004.

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- 27 Center for Religious Freedom of Freedom House and Institute for Gulf Affairs, *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum of Intolerance*, Washington, 2006, p. 8.
- 28 *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum*, p. 8.
- 29 *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum*, p. 13 (references footnoted there).
- 30 *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum*, pp. 13-14 (references there).
- 31 *Saudi Arabia's Curriculum*, p. 23 (references there).
- 32 *Resolution 262: Expressing the sense of Congress regarding Saudi Arabia's policies relating to religious practice and tolerance, including Saudi Arabia's commitment to revise Saudi textbooks to remove intolerant and violent references.*
- 33 'U.S. Commission Finds Troubling Texts at Virginia-based Saudi Academy', 11 June 2008, *Fox News*. Apart from the Saudi academy, there have been growing complaints about attempts by Islamists to infiltrate the American public school system, through talks, books, and other materials. Saudi influence outside Saudi schools has also been discovered. See Cinnamon Stillwell, 'Islam in America's public schools: Education or Indoctrination?', *SFGate*, 11 June 2008.
- 34 Johann Hari, 'We all fund this torrent of Saudi bigotry', *Independent*, 8 February 2007.
- 35 'Teacher Colin Cook wins £69,300 compensation for unfair dismissal', *Mirror*, 15 April 2008.
- 36 See Denis MacEoin, *The Hijacking of British Islam*, London, Policy Exchange, 2007, pp. 51-58.
- 37 'The Battle for German Muslim Minds', *Deutsche Welle*, 7 February, 2005.
- 38 'Authorities to Close Muslim School in Bonn', 11 October 2003.

- 39 Wahhab (sic), quoted Muhammad Akram Khan-Cheema, 'British Muslims in State Schools: a positive way forward', *Issues in Islamic Education*, London, Muslim Educational Trust, 1991 (and update), p. 83.
- 40 Khan-Cheema, 'British Muslims in State Schools'.
- 41 Hewitt, 'The Case for Muslim Schools', p. 72.
- 42 Hewitt, 'The Case for Muslim Schools', p. 74
- 43 A scholarly discussion of this style of thought may be found in M.M. Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background of Early Islam: Studies in Ancient Arab Concepts*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972.
- 44 Biographical notes, *Muslim Education in Europe*, p. 22.
- 45 See Diane Ravitch, *The Language Police: How Pressure Groups Restrict What Students Learn*, New York, 2003. Among her many accomplishments, Ravitch was US Assistant Secretary of Education and Counselor to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander from 1991 to 1993.
- 46 The Arabic is better transcribed as Dar al-'Ulum, the House of Sciences. The Deoband Darul Uloom is still vigorous. Its website can be accessed here: <http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/>. The site has an extensive Darul Ifta or fatwa archive, which offers an excellent guide to the hardline views of the movement.
- 47 Jonathan Birt, 'Locating the British Imam', in Jocelyne Cesari and Seán McLoughlin (eds), *European Muslims and the Secular State*, Aldershot and Burlington, 2005, p. 184.
- 48 Birt, 'Locating', p. 184.
- 49 Birt, 'Locating', p. 185.

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- 50 Alex Alexiev, 'Tablighi Jamaat: Jihad's Stealthy Legions', Middle East Quarterly, Winter 2005, XII:I, at: <http://www.meforum.org/article/686>
- 51 Riazat Butt, 'Islamic group accused of al-Qaida link wants to open second school', *Guardian*, 29 September 2007.
- 52 Cited by Andrew Norfolk, 'Muslim group behind "mega-mosque" seeks to convert all Britain', *The Times*, 10 September, 2007.
- 53 Norfolk, 'Muslim group'.
- 54 For a pious account of its history, see <http://www.inter-islam.org/Pastevents/darululoom.html>.
- 55 See hagiographical account at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yusuf_Motala.
- 56 Justin Gest and Andrew Norfolk, 'British imams "failing young Muslims"', *The Times*, 7 January 2008.
- 57 Gest and Norfolk, 'British imams'.
- 58 'Registration inspection of Imam Muhammad Zakariya school, Dundee', 27 April 2004.
- 59 Birt, 'Locating', p. 187.
- 60 Riyadhul Haq, 'Imitating the Disbelievers', *The Times*, 6 September 2007.
- 61 Riyadhul Haq, 'Imitating the Disbelievers'.
- 62 Riyadhul Haq, 'Riyadhul Haq sermon on "Jewish fundamentalism" in full', *The Times*, 6 September 2007.
- 63 Haq, 'Sermon on Jewish fundamentalism'.
- 64 Haq, 'Sermon on Jewish fundamentalism'. This statement is particularly offensive, given the many thousands of

Palestinians and Israeli Arabs who are routinely treated in Israeli hospitals on the same wards as Jews. Jewish doctors regularly save the lives of terrorists.

- 65 See:
<http://www.stormfront.org/forum/showthread.php?t=307235>

4: Muslim Schools and Women

- 1 See:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/koranandcountry/koran_and_countr.html?select=04
- 2 Laura Clark, 'Muslim pupils won't face outright ban on wearing the veil', *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2007.
- 3 p. 58.
- 4 On the prevalence of this practice in the UK, see James Brandon and Salam Hafez, *Crimes of the Community: Honour-based violence in the UK*, Centre for Social Cohesion, London, 2008, chapter 5.
- 5 www.daruliftaa.com
- 6 In Gita Sahgal and Nira Yuval-Davis (eds), *Refusing Holy Orders*, London, 1992, p. 129.
- 7 In Gita Sahgal and Nira Yuval-Davis (eds), *Refusing Holy Orders*, London, 1992, pp.136 & 142.

5: Muslim Schools and Ofsted

- 1 See:
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/91927/\(as\)/134429_316819.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/91927/(as)/134429_316819.pdf)

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- 2 See:
[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/95071/\(as\)/132736_320390.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/95071/(as)/132736_320390.pdf)
- 3 http://www.tawhid.org.uk/art_policy_december2006.pdf.
- 4 See:
[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/93842/\(as\)/100982_320364.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/93842/(as)/100982_320364.pdf)
- 5 See:
[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/\(id\)/88225/\(as\)/119856_301488.pdf](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxedu_reports/download/(id)/88225/(as)/119856_301488.pdf)
- 6 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4467370.stm>
- 7 See:
<http://www.fevershamcollege.com/home/documents/OfstedReport170108.pdf>
- 1 <http://israelbehindthenews.com/Archives/Apr-14-03.htm>
- 2 See full transcript at:
<http://mpacuk.org/content/view/3266/34/>
- 3 Harper, T., 'TV preachers of hate escape police action', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 January 2007.
- 4 Shiv Malik, 'Islamic Shaksiyah Foundation sets up schools in Britain', *Sunday Times*, 5 August 2007.
- 5 <http://www.islam.tc/ask-imam/view.php?q=1554>
- 6 <http://www.islam.tc/ask-imam/view.php?q=12128>
- 7 <http://islamworld.net/>
- 8 Moore, M., 'Muslim cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi refused visa', *Telegraph*, 8 February 2008.

- 9 See:
http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/jihad/#all_muslims
- 10 See:
http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/jihad/#qu_r%27an
- 11 See:
http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/jihad/#qu_r%27an
- 12 See:
http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/jihad/#scholars
- 13 Allen, C., *God's Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad*, Abacus, 2007, p. 314.
- 14 See:
http://web.youngmuslims.ca/online_library/books/jihad/#associated
- 15 <http://islamworld.net/docs/justice.html>
- 16 Allen, *God's Terrorists: The Wahhabi cult and the hidden roots of modern jihad*, Abacus, 2007, p. 312.

Conclusion

- 1 See particularly: Munira Mirza, Abi Senthilkumaran, and Zein Ja'far, *Living apart together: British Muslims and the paradox of multiculturalism*, London: Policy Exchange, 2007.
- 2 F.n. for an extreme but breathtaking picture of separatism in a school, see Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, London, 2005.

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- 3 Penny Curtis, 'Imams could lead citizenship lessons', *The Guardian*, 31 May 2008.
- 4 A very useful guide to the sort of Muslim intellectual who could take a project like this forward is: Suha Taji-Farouki (ed.) *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur'an*, Oxford, 2004, and Charles Kurzman (ed.), *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, New York, 1998.