

Supporting Safe & Effective Education in Madrassas

(Supplementary Schools)



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Introduction

Project Background

Supplementary education is out-of-house learning provided by communities to support their children's learning in a variety of ways, e.g. homework clubs, maintenance of language, culture and faith.

Birmingham Local Authority recognises and values the contribution that communities make to provide these learning opportunities for children and young people.

The majority of supplementary schools are managed and run by local community groups on a voluntary basis in a variety of different venues such as mosques, temples, gurdwaras, churches, schools and community centres. Most operate during the evenings and weekends, catering for children between the ages of 4 and 16.

The School Effectiveness Division and Birmingham Children's Fund have established a project to develop good practice in madrassas/ supplementary schools in the following areas:

- Teaching & Learning strategies
- Child Protection policy & procedures
- Health & Safety policy & procedures
- Behaviour Management

School Effectiveness Division

School Effectiveness Division within Birmingham City Council is working to improve the life chances of young people in the city by helping to support school improvement. It focuses on raising standards of achievement across the city through influencing a range of processes within education, including leadership and management and learning and teaching.

It aims to:

- Provide schools with the tools necessary to ensure continuing school improvement
- Promote the highest expectations and aspirations for pupils

- Support, protect and challenge schools in order to sustain a genuine belief in the Birmingham family of schools
- Support the Education Department's key principles, in particular: raising pupil attainment, removing failing schools, reducing the equality gap in performance for under-achieving groups, promoting inclusion and increasing motivation, continuity and progression

This is achieved through setting high standards, being clear about purposes and functions, being creative, hard working and supportive.

School Effectiveness Division implements the City Council's priorities, through the development of collaborative schools. School Effectiveness works in partnership with a variety of organisations. A good example of this is the involvement of communities in the Local Authority Heritage Achievement Groups.

Birmingham Children's Fund

The Children's Fund aims to meet the needs of the children and young people in Birmingham aged 5 to 13 who are at most risk from social exclusion.

Groups and organisations from Birmingham were invited to make a suitable bid for taking ownership of a project specifically designed to work with Bangladeshi and Pakistani Supplementary Schools. School Effectiveness Division was successful in getting the contract to work with madrassas/supplementary schools. This formed an integral part of the Supplementary School Education Programme.

One of the aspects of the project, and vital to its overall success, is the provision of services to groups of children across the city. Children from Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are one of the identified groups that the Children's Fund works with. Statistical evidence shows that these are the two ethnic groups in Birmingham most likely to be in serious poverty. Personal, cultural and structural factors have combined to lock them into very

specifically disadvantaged social and economic positions within the city.

Some of these communities are clustered in areas located both inside and outside the Children's Fund's targeted areas. But their need is so extensive that they need to be included in the overall provision.

In order to meet the needs of Bangladeshi and Pakistani children, the project aims to:

- Provide support to supplementary education providers to improve and enhance standards of delivery
- Provide effective learning opportunities for Pakistani and Bangladeshi children

In addition, the Birmingham Children's Fund is governed by the guidance set out by the Government's 'Children, Young People and Families Directorate'. This aims to meet the following two objectives that are sub-objectives to the two stated above:

- To achieve overall improved educational performance among children and young people aged between five and thirteen
- To ensure that children and young people at the risk of social exclusion receive the service that they need

Every Child Matters

The School Effectiveness Division and the Children's Fund also aim to meet the aims and objectives of the Government's Every Child Matters agenda. This agenda has been developed to work towards the following five outcomes where children are concerned:

- Stay Safe
- Enjoy & Achieve
- Be Healthy
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Achieve Economic Well-being

This agenda is designed to work towards improving outcomes for all children and young people.

The two outcomes from the ECM agenda that form part of the objectives of this project are:

- Stay Safe: Steps are taken to provide children and young people with a safe environment
- Enjoy & Achieve: Steps are taken to ensure educational provision is of good quality

These two outcomes form an important part of the objectives of this project in looking to meet the needs of Pakistani and Bangladeshi children who are at risk of social exclusion and disadvantage.

In summary, the following basic objectives formed the grounding for the work to be carried out with fourteen madrassas that were selected to be part of this project:

- Providing children with a safe environment
- Child protection arrangements are understood and in place. All staff and volunteers have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) certificates
- Staff and volunteers have improved knowledge and skills to meet the learning needs of children
- Supplementary school staff, parents and children will access information regarding the appropriate range of children's services
- Parents and children are consulted on matters regarding supplementary education
- Identify key funders and agencies to work with/or target for funding and have a clear strategy in place for future of service

Islamic Education Schools – Madrassas

Madrassa is the Arabic term used for a supplementary school. The purpose of supplementary schools for the Muslim community is very important: they are set up to deliver Islamic education in order to preserve religious, cultural and linguistic identities. They particularly deal with learning of the Quran.

Muslim supplementary schools operate either from local mosques or are set up independently for the sole purpose of teaching the Quran and Islam. The school usually has a committee or a management board comprising members elected from within the local community who take on roles of responsibility such as chair, general secretary, treasurer and education officer. Financial income for the schools is mainly generated through fees, funding and, mostly, donations from the local community.

Muslim schools generally operate after school between 4.00 pm and 7.00 pm or at the weekends. In most cases the subjects taught are Quranic recitation and prayer memorisation. Some may teach additional subjects, e.g. Islamic studies or languages that may be used at the Muslim child's home, such as Urdu or Bengali.

The Muslim supplementary school forms a crucial part of a Muslim child's education because, generally, Muslim children attend these schools.

The Pakistani and Bangladeshi Communities

Both communities originally come from the South Asian subcontinent. Alongside many similarities in religious and cultural matters, there are some traditional differences apparent between the two. These are usually in areas like food delicacies, traditional dress and language.

The Pakistani community has been established for longer than the Bangladeshi community due to earlier emigration for work in England during the 1960s. Bangladeshis have been arriving steadily to settle in England since the late 1970s. A more comprehensive overview of these communities is available in the 'Raising Achievement of Pakistani & Bangladeshi Boys', published by Bass in March 2005.

Methodology

School Selection

Madrassas were selected from target areas identified by Birmingham Children's Fund (BCF). These areas include Small Heath, Handsworth, Aston, Lozells, Balsall Heath, Sattley and Sparkbrook. These areas have a large number of residents who come from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds. Other selection criteria included:

- Bangladeshi and Pakistani children aged between 5 and 13 years
- Madrassas that do not have all or some of the following policies in place
 - -Health and Safety policy
 - -Child Protection policy including CRB checks
 - -Teaching and Learning policy
 - -Behaviour policy
- Staff-identified training needs in the above matters
- Readiness to make changes to improve provision

The madrassas selected were a mixture of those who receive Birmingham City Council Grant Aid and those who do not. The Birmingham City Council (BCC) database of madrassas was initially used to select madrassas who receive BCC grant aid. A few Pakistani madrassas were recommended by BCF and a few Bangladeshi madrassas were recommended by the Education, Development and Advisory Services (EDAS) Foundation.

Initial contact with madrassas was made by phone calls. The project aims and objectives were discussed and a meeting was arranged with madrassas who were interested. Four out of the eighteen madrassas initially visited did not want to take part in the project. Two were Bangladeshi and two were Pakistani. The reasons were one or both of the following:

- Not ready to change
- Uncomfortable liaising with women

The final selection included a variety of madrassas located in mosques. They primarily teach the Quran in Arabic. Additional subjects include Islamic Studies, Urdu and Bengali.

Project Launch

The project was launched at a meeting which brought together managers from all the madrassas within the project. Nine out of the twelve selected madrassas at the time attended the project launch.

Members of the panel at the launch included:

- Nargis Rashid – Senior Advisor (SED)
- Shaheda Begum – Project Development Worker (SED)
- Rabiya Latif – Project Development Worker (SED)
- Stuart Carlton – Director (BCF)
- Manzoor Hussain – Projects Co-ordinator (BCF)
- Samera Khan – (Children Signposting Services)
- Mohammad Ishaq – Centre Manger (City Learning Centre)

Those who attended the project launch received a pack including the project aims, objectives and outcomes. The packs also included a sample of the pro formas which were going to be used.

The project launch was attended by members of the management committee and teaching staff. Nargis Rashid welcomed the madrassas' representatives, giving an overview of the project. Manzoor Hussain gave an overview of the involvement of Birmingham Children's Fund in the project. Shaheda Begum provided a summary of the project's aims and outcomes and Rabiya Latif provided a summary of the methodology.

Members of the supplementary madrassas were given the opportunity to ask the panel questions regarding the project and the work we would be doing with them. A couple of concerns were raised by one of the madrassas who asked if the project would turn out to be a witch-hunt. They were concerned that the Local Authority would name madrassas that did not have the necessary policies before its involvement. Stuart Carlton stressed the importance of having certain procedures and policies in place to avoid/reduce unnecessary allegations. One madrassa also asked where and when staff training would take place.

All madrassas were satisfied about the project and pleased to hear that they would be one of the model supplementary schools in Birmingham.

Identification of Staff Training Needs

One focal area of the project was to provide teachers with training in the following areas:

- Child Protection policy & procedures
- Health & Safety policy & procedures
- Teaching & Learning strategies
- Behaviour Management

These four areas of training would provide teachers with the required knowledge to ensure that children would be safe in their environment and also to ensure that they would enjoy and achieve.

Initial contact with teachers was made when carrying out the staff training needs assessment. This was achieved by visiting each madrasa and seeing teachers individually. On occasions where teachers were unable to make their appointment, the training needs assessment was left with the manager who was then responsible for returning a completed copy.

The assessment was carried out to identify the level of understanding that teachers had in the areas of training that would be provided. It also determined whether any policies and procedures were already being implemented effectively within the madrassas.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were instigated in twelve madrassas for children, parents and teachers. Each group was asked to feedback on any improvements on safety within the madrasa and any changes in their childrens learning experience.

The focus groups were first brought into action at the beginning of the project before any training was provided to staff and then for the second time after all the training was provided. Children and parents' focus groups were formed separately at the individual madrassas.

Each madrasa was asked to select 6-8 children aged between 5 and 13 years, coming from Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage to take part in the children's focus group. Teachers in each of the Madrassas picked the children who took part in the focus groups.

A set of questions (appendix 1) and an activity (appendix 1a) was used to obtain feedback from the children.

Parents from Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage were invited to engage in a parents' focus group. A discussion was initiated using a set of questions (appendix 1b) for the parents.

Teachers from all madrassas were invited to form a focus group for the purpose of obtaining general feedback for the management of each madrasa, but also to create a network whereby teachers could share good practice.

Initial Findings

Teacher Training

Assessments with teachers were carried out to identify the level of understanding that teachers had within the areas of training that would be covered. This helped to evaluate the level of training that was required for teachers and what madrassas needed to do in terms of implementing policies effectively.

Initial assessments suggested the following:

- Training sessions required careful planning due to the needs of the teachers
- Teachers came from a variety of backgrounds such as Bangladesh, India, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Morocco
- The level of qualifications and training amongst teachers varied from years of teaching experience, Islamic studies qualifications obtained abroad at recognised Institutes of Islamic education through to Qualified Teacher Status

Many teachers had obtained qualifications in the subject of Islam such as:

- BA honours in Islamic Studies
- MA in Islamic studies
- Specialist Hifz training – this is where the Quran is memorised by the student
- Specialist Alam training that is a recognised teaching status within the Islamic teaching context

Furthermore, due to cultural sensitivities, the following was taken into consideration:

- Separate training sessions for male and female teachers
- Training sessions in the audience language: Urdu and Bengali

As a result, additional sessions were held to ensure the training provided was effective for those who did not understand English. All training was held during the morning as this was the desired time for most teachers.

Training was held between November 2005 and February 2006.

Child Protection

Few madrassas held CRB certificates for their teachers. Those that did hold certificates were usually for teachers who also taught during the day at mainstream schools. Overall knowledge and understanding of the child protection policy was weak. Those who had some knowledge did so because they had attended child protection training through the Local Authority.

Five child protection training sessions were held for all members of staff and management to provide them with knowledge of the Child Protection law and requirements. As this is a compulsory requirement for all services working with children, this area of training was deemed the most important:

- Ensuring that all teachers have a valid CRB certificate
- Providing knowledge regarding the Children Act 1989
- Safeguarding children in education
- Adapting necessary madrassa policies and procedures
- Dealing with different types of abuse

There was 100% attendance from madrassas for child protection training sessions.

Overall evaluation showed that the course provided increased knowledge of child protection policy and procedures. Teachers expressed that they felt all areas of training that were covered were important.

Health & Safety

Although six out of the twelve madrassas had health and safety policies, teachers showed only a basic level of understanding of its requirements. For example they knew it covered safety of children within the environment if there was a fire or that it covered first aid when a child was hurt. Detailed explanation of how this policy is implemented was not forthcoming.

There were eight health and safety training sessions for all staff which provided them with knowledge of

the necessary Health and Safety law requirements:

- Health and Safety plans
- Risk Assessment
- Incident Reporting
- First Aid

The roles of the management as well as staff were explained in order to ensure that the policy would be implemented effectively.

There was 100% representation from madrassas. Overall evaluation showed that teachers thought this was a very good session and most of them stated in their evaluations that they would look to implement health and safety procedures.

Teaching & Learning

Most madrassas used the basic method for teaching Quranic Arabic – rote style in large groups. Few madrassas varied the content and style of teaching in accordance with the age of the children. There was little evidence of the use of a variety of resources to make learning more practical and interesting. Teachers did not use a merit scheme however most of the madrassas seemed to have an annual function where top achievers were rewarded and to which parents were invited.

Initial assessment in this area showed that there was no professional development for teaching staff.

This area of training was provided to identify and develop staff skills in the principles for effective teaching so that children can enjoy their learning experience.

The following areas were covered:

- Lesson planning to be interesting and enjoyable
- Assessment of learning patterns and progression
- Use of different types of resources for effective teaching

During the session, a model lesson plan called “clean habits” was used as an activity to provide an example of how the subject of cleanliness in Islam can be taught using different methods. Examples

of how each of the above areas could be applied in a Muslim supplementary education environment were provided consistently.

There was 100% representation from madrassas in this area of training.

Staff enjoyed this session thoroughly, as it related directly to what they did, namely teach.

All the areas that were covered were highlighted as being beneficial in the evaluation that was completed. The most popular areas seemed to be madrasa aims, lesson planning and assessment.

Overall evaluation showed that teachers would share the session content with others and that they had learnt new things regarding using different methods in teaching.

Behaviour Management

Five madrassas held a behaviour policy of which four were implementing it effectively. Where the policy was not used or being implemented effectively, teachers stated during their assessments that sometimes it was difficult to control children’s behaviour in the madrasa. Because of the short period of time the children were there and the large groupings, it was sometimes difficult to maintain order.

This was an area that all madrassas showed a keen interest in improving. Some madrassas felt they were unable to control the children, while others simply wanted to add new rules to existing ones or to make them more effective.

One session of behaviour management training was held for staff. The manager and a member of staff was invited from each madrasa. This session aimed to:

- Understand the influence of staff behaviour on staff-pupil relationships
- Identify and develop staff skills for building and maintaining effective relationships
- Explain the use of praise to encourage positive behaviour and attendance

There was 92% attendance from madrassas for this area.

Teachers and managers enjoyed this session and were keen to have further training for this, as it was an area in need of improvement.

A further session on behaviour management specific to a supplementary school setting was held for teachers to show them how principles could be applied.

There was 100% representation from madrassas for this session.

They found the session beneficial, particularly the areas of 'developing staff-pupil relations' and 'identifying assertive teaching skills'. Adopting a madrasa behaviour policy was also favoured amongst staff who expressed that it was required to manage children.

Focus Groups

Children's Focus Groups

A total of 78 children were involved in the first round of focus groups, for which there was a good turnout, with more than 6 children attending a session in 8 out of the 12 madrassas.

The set of questions used in the children's focus groups aimed to cover the following two outcomes of the Every Child Matters agenda: Stay Safe and Enjoy and Achieve.

Stay Safe

When children were asked whom they would report an injury to, children in eleven out of the twelve madrassas said that they would initially inform their classroom teacher. Children from the other madrasa said that they would go to their madrasa office. Children were not aware of a first aider in any of the madrassas.

Children were asked how adults should behave around them. They said that adults should:

- Respect them
- Listen to them
- Treat them fairly
- Pay attention to them when teaching
- Speak clearly when giving out instructions
- Be nice
- Trust them
- Discipline only those who misbehave
- Not shout at them
- Help them when they are stuck
- Act as positive role models
- Be on time for lessons

Managing behaviour was an issue which came up in many of the madrassas; therefore children were asked how they thought they should behave whilst at madrasa. Children said that they should be quiet when asked; not shout; listen; be punctual; follow classroom/madrasa rules; respect others; dress appropriately for madrasa; respect the madrasa environment; not fight and swear. Children also said that they had a responsibility to report other children's bad behaviour to the teacher.

Enjoy and Achieve

All children who took part in the focus group enjoyed attending their madrasa. Reasons given for why they enjoyed attending madrasa include the following:

- Learning Islamic Studies
- Reading the Quran
- Socialising, nice teachers
- Special events e.g. Eid parties, assemblies
- Performing Salaat

Children were asked what they would like to improve or change about their supplementary education in order to enjoy and enhance their learning. Children said that they would like a more varied curriculum; more group work; use of ICT;

access to other resources. Children preferred smaller class sizes in order to have more one-to-one time with their class teacher. Children also stated that they would like to spend less time at madrassa and have a break half way through each session. Being rewarded for achievement (merit chart) was one of the things most children would like to introduce in their madrassa. Other improvements included more teachers, especially female teachers, as there is a lack of females teaching in these madrassas. Children also want improved hygiene facilities, better ventilation and heating.

Although children enjoyed attending madrassa, they all wanted to feel more motivated to learn whilst at madrassa. A variety of subjects, lesson planning and more structure in the classrooms is needed in order to fulfil the enjoyment and achievement these children desire from their supplementary education.

Parents' Focus Groups

In the majority of the madrassas, the parents' focus group was the first time parents had been invited to the madrassa to talk about their child's Islamic education. There were at least 5 parents at each of the sessions held. Those parents who did engage in the sessions found it very beneficial and said that they should have been provided with an opportunity to share their views and ideas before.

In many madrassas it was difficult to engage parents in a focus group. Visits were made to catch parents when they came to drop off children to madrassa in order to encourage them to engage in the focus group. However, this was unsuccessful in many madrassas.

There was a poor turnout for the parent's focus groups, with less than six parents attending in half of the madrassas.

The most common form parents used to check children's progress at madrassa was to ask the children what they had learnt at madrassa on a daily or weekly basis. Parents also stated that they saw their children revising for tests or exams and

also practising what they had learnt, e.g. Salaat.

Parents from ten out of the twelve madrassas stated that they had a good relationship with their children's class teacher and communicate on a regular basis, usually when dropping off and picking up their children. Parents from the other two madrassas said that there was no relationship between them and their children's teacher due to the fact that the teachers are all male. These focus groups consisted of women only. Parents explained that they do not feel comfortable talking to a male teacher. None of the madrassas hold a formal parents' evening. This was a popular request by a majority of parents.

Parents encourage their children to attend madrassa by telling them that they need to gain a better understanding of Islam. Parents also stated that they explain that children will be rewarded for their good deeds in their present life and afterlife. Many parents reward their children for attending madrassa. This is most commonly done with younger children. Rewards include sweets, trainers, and computer games.

All the parents in the focus groups had some understanding of the teaching content at their child's madrassa. However, in some madrassas parents were only aware of the basic content, e.g. teaching of the Quran, Salaat and their community language. All parents who took part in the groups said that they would like to receive a copy of the madrassa's prospectus.

Parents were asked if they were aware of any policies that the madrassa had. In 25% of the madrassas some of the parents were aware of a health and safety policy. In the others, parents were not aware that the madrassa should have any policies at all.

Overall, parents stated that their children were happy at their madrassas. Many felt that there was no formal means to communicate with their child's teacher and information on their children's progress was only received verbally. Parents' evenings or reports were requested by some parents; however the madrassas that had held parents' evenings in

the past said that attendance had been very low or non-existent.

Teachers' Focus Groups

Over 50% of the madrassas were represented in the first focus groups. Due to cultural sensitivity, groups were formed separately between male and female teachers.

Teachers were asked what they enjoyed about working at their madrassas. They said:

- Mainly, teaching children about Islam
- Teaching values. (One teacher said, "I believe that we are helping society in the long run by filling in a gap that mainstream schools do not address. We teach children about morals, values and etiquette. We give children their identity.")
- Seeing children happy when they move on to learn the Quran and also learn their mother tongue

Teachers were asked what changes they would make to provide a more effective educational service. They said:

- More financial help
- Nicer environment
- More resources
- Employ more teachers and pay them better
- Follow a curriculum and have set examination times throughout the year
- Introduce a madrassa uniform policy
- Reduce class sizes
- Teach the meaning of the Quran

Eleven out of the twelve madrassas did not have an achievement monitoring system in place for their pupils. Parents are informed about their children's progress mostly when they are dropping off or picking up their children. None of the madrassas hold a formal parents' evening or write reports. Children are rewarded for hard work and achievement in 75% of the madrassas.

Communication

The main issue emerging from discussions with children, parents and teachers was that of communication. There was little evidence that management committees of madrassas had prioritised communication as a way of engaging and consulting teachers, pupils and parents. Time and time again in parents' and teachers' focus groups this issue was mentioned as a real concern. There was direct evidence of lack of communication in some cases, as teachers failed to attend training courses or parents did not turn up for focus groups.

Reasons for the lack of communication are as follows:

- Members of the management committee do not hold formal meetings with teaching staff, which means that there is no means to share information regarding the operation of the madrassa.
- Madrassas do not hold formal parents' evenings so there is no means of building parent-teacher relationships. Most parents drop off children and pick them up from outside the madrassas, with no communication with teachers.
- Parents from two of the Bangladeshi madrassas said that they did not communicate with teachers because there were only male teachers teaching at their children's madrassa.
- Communication between project workers in three out of the twelve madrassas was poor. Contacts were difficult to get hold of or did not return calls, attend management meetings or training sessions.

Outcomes

The project was generally well received in the participating madrassas, but progress was variable. The madrassas where most progress was made were those that had leaders and teachers with a strong sense of commitment and were aware that improvements were needed. However, a few madrassas made little progress during the nine month period.

Teacher Training

Implementation of Training Provided

When training had been completed, follow-up visits were arranged with the management of madrassas to support implementation of the statutory policies: Child Protection and Health & Safety as well as the general areas of Teaching & Learning and Behaviour Management.

Eight out of the twelve madrassas were able to show child protection and health & safety policies that they had drawn up since training. The remaining 4 were in the process of compiling theirs.

Madrassas were able to provide names of nominated fire and safety, first aid and child protection officers with the view to having them trained within their roles.

A total of 25 CRB copy certificates have been provided to date. (This figure is subject to change, prior to print, due to late submissions.)

Six madrassas had already compiled their teaching and learning policies while six others were compiling theirs. Those who had begun to use a teaching and learning policy were able to show how lessons were now being taught with a variety of resources and content. Breaks had been incorporated between sessions that were usually split between Quranic Arabic and Islamic studies.

Madrassas that had shown commitment throughout the project were supplied with ICT resources to help support and build their teaching and learning practice. Ten of the twelve madrassas

received their resources as agreed. A training day was arranged to support the use of the equipment for those who had no basic ICT knowledge.

The behaviour policy was being implemented in eight madrassas, while two were in discussion about what type of behaviour policy would best suit them. Those that had implemented the policy effectively found that sharing it with children was very important, as the rules applied to them while they were learning. Some madrassas had drafted formal detention slips, while others used verbal warnings.

Overall, eight madrassas had taken clear steps to make improvements where required, two were in the process of making improvements, while two madrassas were unable to show any change or improvement.

Focus Groups

The second round of focus groups was carried out to monitor the effectiveness of the training and the implementation of policies and procedures.

Children's Focus Groups

Children who were involved in the first round of focus groups were asked to take part in the second session. Additional children were also invited to join the group and did so in some madrassas. Overall, 121 children were seen throughout the duration of the project.

Through discussions, it was established that teachers in eight out of twelve madrassas were giving children a break during learning time and there was more structure and variety in the subjects taught. The children found this made their time at madrassa more interesting, as they had a better understanding of what they were learning. Some children suggested more practical lessons. Children were aware of the ICT equipment that had been provided for the school and some were able to

explain how it was being used to aid their learning. Children were asked to name the Child Protection, Health & Safety and First Aid officers at their madrassas. Only four groups named the correct people appointed for the various roles. Madrassas were made aware that users of the organisation, including children, must know the names of those holding important roles.

In order to improve behaviour management, madrassas had made improvements in setting out clear guidelines. Children were asked what new rules had been introduced at their madrassa. Some of the rules were: no talking whilst reading; detentions for those who broke the rules; notifying parents if poor behaviour continued. Some children were able to explain the behaviour policy their madrassa had adopted.

Through these group discussions, it became apparent that four of the madrassas had not made the required changes for the purpose of improving supplementary education so that it is effective.

Overall, the final focus group and evaluations showed that children enjoyed the project for a variety of reasons:

"The project was good because we were able to say what we want to change in the mosque." boy aged 13 (see appendix 4).

"Mosque is more fun now." boy aged 5 (see appendix 4a).

"Our learning atmosphere is much brighter and lively now." girl aged 12 (see appendix 4b).

The range of children's comments showed that they had experienced a positive change in their learning environment.

Parents' Focus Groups

Parents were invited to participate in a discussion where an update on progress to date was provided and some general discussion to find out whether their own knowledge had increased with regard to their child's education.

10 madrassas successfully arranged for parents to

attend the session, of which 6 had a very good attendance and 4 had a low attendance. 2 madrassas were unable to arrange this session.

Eight groups of parents out of the twelve madrassas were aware of the changes that had been incorporated to improve the quality of teaching and learning at their child's madrassa. Examples that were given were of breaks being incorporated and a variety of subjects being taught. In the other 4 schools parents did not report any changes; it became clear through discussion that it was the lack of communication between parents and teachers that had led to this confusion.

Most parents encouraged regular parents' evenings, reports to be sent home and the formation of a Parent & Teacher Association. This would improve the communication between parents and teachers.

Parents' awareness of statutory and non statutory policies relevant to the madrassa their child attended was still poor. Most parents were unable to name the policies. A general overview of each policy was provided by the development workers.

Teachers' Focus Groups

This session focused on how knowledge gained from training is being used at the madrassas. Teachers were asked how beneficial training was. All teachers said that the training provided was very beneficial and had increased their knowledge in the four areas in which training had been provided.

Most of the teachers have started to plan their lessons. Teachers from madrassas that do not have a curriculum said that they wanted to have some responsibility for putting a curriculum together. Teachers shared ideas between themselves and talked about the benefits of their madrassa and other madrassas taking part in the project. Teachers from six out of the eight madrassas said that they will be having meetings with senior staff on a weekly or monthly basis.

Some teachers said that they would like to continue attending training sessions which will help them teach more effectively. The teachers' focus

groups have provided a means for teachers to establish a link in order to share good practice. Teachers said that a teachers' network is a good idea and that they would like it to continue.

One teacher said that training would have been more convenient if it had taken place in the evening. However the staff training needs assessment showed that more than 50% of the teachers wanted training to take place in the morning.

Overall, the final focus groups and evaluations showed that teachers found a number of things beneficial about the project: the training provided; resources allocated; being engaged in the progress of the madrassa; meeting other teachers; increased positive outlook within the classroom.

When asked about how the project has affected their teaching and learning aspect, the following statements were made:

"I am able to split the time so children are able to learn various things over a period of time."

"Our teachers have started use a laptop and projector to teach us; this is more effective than just talking."

Communication

During the follow-up visits to monitor the implementation of policies and procedures, there was evidence of a breakdown of communication within some of the madrassas. Important information was still not reaching all parties and, hence, progress was being slowed down within.

The 8 madrassas that were able to show clear progress and implementation of policies and procedures were ensuring that communication channels had been created to engage all those that

were concerned with any particular area of education in their madrassas.

Staff from all the madrassas found the training beneficial, as it has led to many improvements within the learning environment and has had a positive effect on teaching and learning.

Senior staff stated that:

"We now use a more positive and child-centred approach to teaching."

"The project was very supportive of the teachers through providing appropriate training and relevant resources."

The provision of resources was appreciated as it enabled them to add variety in teaching methods.

Clearer communication channels were being introduced to ensure regular meetings with students, teachers and parents.

Recommendations

ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY	Management Committee	Head Teacher	Teachers
Stay Safe			
Maintain individual pupil records	✓		
Health & Safety Officer	✓	✓	
First Aider	✓		
Child Protection Officer	✓		
Practice evacuation procedures	✓	✓	
Awareness of relevant policies	✓	✓	
CRB check for all staff working with and around children	✓	✓	
Enjoy & Achieve			
Produce a well-structured syllabus	✓	✓	
Monitor and assess pupils	✓		
Rewards and sanctions	✓		
Interactive learning	✓		
Use of a variety of resources	✓		
Breaks	✓		
Reduce class sizes (max 20)	✓	✓	✓
Events and celebrations	✓		
Communication			
Form and maintain a parent-teacher association	✓	✓	
Parents' evening to build rapport with parents	✓		
A suggestion box for parents	✓		
Training			
Notify staff of relevant training	✓		
Courses			
Update staff training needs when required	✓		
Attend all compulsory training	✓		
Policies			
Share with parents, teachers & pupils	✓	✓	

Appendices

Appendix 1

Children's Focus Group Questions

- What do you enjoy about coming to this supplementary school?
- What would you like to change?
- Who would you have to speak to if you injured yourself at school? (E.g. if you had a cut or a fall)
- How should adults behave around children?
- How should you behave when you come to the school?

Children were asked to write what they enjoyed about their madrasa within the snowman and to write what they would change about their madrasa outside the snowman.



SNOWY

Appendix 1b

Children's Focus Group Questions

Second Session

1. What changes (if any) have taken place since the last focus group?
2. Who is the named Child Protection Officer at your supplementary school?
3. Who is the named Health and Safety (Fire Officer) at your supplementary school?
4. Who is the First Aid Officer(s) at your supplementary school?
5. What new rules do you have at school? (if any)
6. Are there any changes in the way that the lessons are carried out?
7. How have these changes affected the way you are taught?
8. Do you have a reward system in place? If so, what kind?

Appendix 2

Parents' Focus Group Questions

- How do you know that your child is making progress at the supplementary school?
- How do you encourage your child to learn/achieve at the supplementary school?
- What relationship do you have with the teachers at the school?
- What is your understanding of the content of your child's supplementary education?
- Are you aware of any policies the supplementary school has in place regarding your child's safety and well-being?
- Does your child enjoy coming to learn here?
- What do you think your child would like to see done differently at the supplementary school?

Appendix 2a

Parents' Focus Group Questions

Second Session

General Feedback given

Changes since last session: have they noticed anything different?

Parent - Teacher relations (any improvement?)

Methods of teaching – any change/feedback from their children etc?

Policy awareness

Parent and Teacher forums formed or not?

Appendix 3

Teachers' Focus Group Questions

1. What do you enjoy about working at your school?
2. What would you change?
3. How do you plan your sessions?
4. Are there any schemes or is there a syllabus for teaching?
5. Who prepares them?
6. How do you know that children are making progress?
7. What kind of records do you keep?
8. In what way do you inform parents about the progress children are making?
9. How is good effort and hard work praised?
10. How do you deal with bad behaviour?
11. Do you have any other roles at the school?
12. How do you communicate information back to your seniors?

Appendix 4

Project Evaluation

What did you like about the project?

"The project was good because we were able to say what we wanted to change in the Mosque"

What would you like to improve about the project?

Left blank

Appendix 4a

Project Evaluation

What did you like about the project?

Mosque is more fun now

I liked Shaheda and Rabiya

What would you like to improve about the project?

Left blank

Appendix 4b

Project Evaluation

What did you like about the project?

I liked it when the project helped us learn Islam in a more creative way. Our learning atmosphere is much brighter and lively now

What would you like to improve about the project?

I think the project is going well and does not need to be changed

Phase 2

Network of current participating madrassas to continue

Select 10 more madrassas 2006-2007

Support worker will monitor if recommendations will be followed through and outstanding work in madrassas completed

Madrassa (supplementary school) Profiles

Madrassa 1

No of pupils: 250 approx

Al Bokhari Education Centre
2 Knowle Road
Sparkhill
Birmingham
B11 3AW

Madrassa 6

No of pupils: 255 approx

Hazrat Sultan Bahu Trust
17 Ombersley Road
Balsall Heath
Birmingham
B12 8UR

Madrassa 11

No of pupils: 80 approx

Madrassa Islamia Rizvia
221 Alexandra Road
Acocks Green
Birmingham
B27 6UE

Madrassa 2

No of pupils: 35 approx

Bangladesh Islamic Social Organisation
526 Moseley Road
Balsall Heath
Birmingham
B12 9AE

Madrassa 7

No of pupils: 34 approx

Islamic Education Centre & Mosque
232 Witton Road
Aston
Birmingham
B6 64B

Madrassa 12

No of pupils: 300 approx

Madrassa Salafiah
20 Green Lane
Small Heath
Birmingham
B9 5BD

Madrassa 3

No of pupils: 80 approx

Birmingham Central Mosque
180 Belgrave Middleway
Highgate
Birmingham
B12 0XS

Madrassa 8

No of pupils: 46 approx

Jalalabad Trust
27-29 Dartmouth Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
B29 6BQ

Madrassa 4

No of pupils: 200 approx

Central Jamia Ghamkol Sharif
107-113 Golden Hillock Road
Small Heath
Birmingham
B10 0LL

Madrassa 9

No of pupils: 70 approx

Jami Mosque & Islamic centre
523-525 Coventry Road
Small Heath
Birmingham
B10 0LL

Madrassa 5

No of pupils: 30 approx

Darussunnah Foundation
127 Fredrick Road
Aston
Birmingham
B6 6BP

Madrassa 10

No of pupils: 90 approx

Jamia Masjid Bilal
1 Willow Crescent
Balsall Heath
Birmingham
B12 9NS



