

**MBA [Ed.] Final Dissertation
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**The Significance of State funding for
Muslim Education in Britain**

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Synopsis

This study examined the viability of independent Muslim schools existing in today's society and whether there would be any significant changes to their ethos / function, in the event of receiving state funding.

Arguments are presented in support of such schools from two theoretical perspectives; Pluralist and Muslim. Parallels are drawn from these perspectives, thereby determining their validity.

Counter arguments are also examined, discussing their merit and relevance in society today.

The case study style of research is adopted, enabling use the use of various methods / techniques on three independent Muslim schools, each at different stages of development. Primary and secondary sources of data are relied upon when conducting the respective case studies.

The point of focus in each study is the initial foundation of the school and factors affecting their development and existence.

The findings of each case study are then discussed, using the results of the interviews conducted, to triangulate relevant information obtained, thus validating or negating the data extrapolated from documentary evidence.

Comparisons are made with other similar primary research conducted in this field.

Conclusions are drawn from the earlier chapters, confirming the validity of independent Muslim schools existing in today's society. The implications of such schools becoming state funded are discussed in light of the research findings, highlighting the choice/s some schools must take, based upon their initial strategic objectives / ethos, and current circumstances affecting both the resources and surrounding environment.

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Contents

	Page
Statement of purpose	5
Chapter One: Islam – the complete way of life	10
Chapter Two: Arguments supporting the establishment of independent Muslim schools	15
Part 1: The Pluralist perspective	15
-Cultural Relativism	16
Part 2: The Muslim perspective	19
Part 3: Arguments against the establishment of Muslim schools	23
Chapter Three: Methodology for research	26
-Participant observation	27
-Documentary analysis	28
-Interviews	29
Chapter Four: Case studies	31
-Case study 1: Feversham College	31
-STEP analysis	31
-Competitive rivalry	34
-Resources & strategic capability	34
-SWOT analysis	34
-Stakeholder analysis	35
-Critical forces affecting Feversham	36
-Case study 2: Islamia school	37
-STEP analysis	37
-Competitive rivalry	39
-Resources & strategic capability	39
-SWOT analysis	40
-Stakeholder analysis	41
-Critical forces affecting Islamia	41

-Case study 3: Iqra school	42
-STEP analysis	43
-Competitive rivalry	45
-Resources & strategic capability	45
-SWOT analysis	46
-Culture & stakeholder expectations	48
-Critical forces affecting Iqra	49
-The Curriculum	49
-Interviews	50
Chapter Five: Research findings & results	52
-Critical forces – analysis	54
-Interview analysis	55
-Triangulation of data	59
Conclusion	61
Bibliography	

Statement of purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the implications of state funding on Muslim schools.

To date, only two Muslim schools have received state funding and this has been after almost fifteen years of continuous petitioning by the Muslim community and its sympathisers. The Muslim community had, up until the recent break through of state funding for its schools; (9th January 1998) questioned the reasons as to why the Government had repeatedly rejected their previous applications. After all;

“ Muslims have the right under the 1944 Education Act to set up their own separate Voluntary schools (cr. Swann Report, 1985, p499); such schools are financed mainly by the State but have the freedom, within certain boundaries, to determine their own admissions policy and form of religious education and worship.” Halstead [1986 p1]

The realisation of Muslims having their own state funded schools has caused jubilation for some and concern for others, reflecting the wide range of feelings and interest this issue has generated over the years;

“I have been getting calls... congratulating the school on the historic achievement” and, ***“There’ll be jubilation as the news spreads.”*** (Zafar Ashraf, parents spokesman for Islamia School, one of the schools granted state funding on 9th January 1998 - The Times newspaper 10th January 1998 p.2).

In contrast the concerns over this apparent break through were highlighted by Dr Patrick Sookhdeo of the Institute for the study of Islam and Christianity, when he claimed that such schools could be ***“breeding grounds for extremism.”*** (Daily Mail, 10th January 1998, p.30).

Many authors have argued vehemently in favour of Muslim schools receiving state funding. However, thus far there do not appear to be many authors examining or indeed, discussing the possible implications of state funding on such schools.

Certain questions need answering. For example, is there a significant proportion of the Muslim community that would prefer that all Muslim schools remain totally independent from the state? Does such funding bring with it compromise in essential Islamic principles and the overall ethos of these schools?

This dissertation shall focus on the second question posed, examining the implications of state funding and whether it carries stringent conditions which, in effect, forces the school to compromise its fundamental religious values / ethos thereby removing it from the ideal perspective of what an ***Islamic***

school should be. After all, a **School for Muslims** is not necessarily an **Islamic** one, as shall be discussed shortly.

Having said this, the case for having independent schools for Muslims, as opposed to providing an Islamic curriculum in non - denominational state schools, requires a brief discussion. This study will therefore, also highlight some of the key factors on why independent schools for Muslims must exist within the British society, on a par with other value - led schools;

“Muslim pupils have special needs by virtue of their identity and adherence...”

M.Parker - Jenkins [1995 p59]

The mere provision of an Islamically orientated curriculum or programme in the normal state schools is not enough, in most cases, to imbue the Muslim pupils with the desired Islamic identity that is supposed to permeate every aspect of their lives.

A Muslim environment should exist for the pupil where he / she can develop every aspect of their character, academically, mentally, physically and spiritually, thereby avoiding the conflict so often witnessed amongst Muslim children attending state schools;

“No child should be expected to cast off the language and culture of the home as he crosses the school threshold, nor live and act as though the school and home represent two totally separate and different cultures which have to be kept apart.”

The Bullock Report ('A Language for Life' [1975,p286])

Many independent schools continue to attract pupils whose parents feel that the State system contains inadequacies or simply does not meet their own particular educational requirements.

Muslim education is not the area of contention amongst the British society today, Muslim and non - Muslim alike; the area of contention is whether such education is to be delivered in an **'Islamic school'**, which is built entirely upon the foundations of the religion and, therefore requires little, if any, alternative legislation from other sources on how to function, or a **'school for Muslims'**, this being an establishment open to compromising and adjusting its ethos and principles in accordance with State requirements, just so it can exist. In other words, the latter type of school would be considered by some to be Islamic by name but not in nature.

The recent change in government witnessed the renewed vigour and success of the Muslim community in Britain, petitioning for the state funding of some of its schools. This has been an issue which has generated interest amongst the Muslim community for as long as Muslim educational needs have not been sufficiently met in state schools. The apparent injustice was made worse by the fact that Muslim

state schools already existed in other European countries, Denmark and Sweden for example. These countries had clearly adhered to their own legislation when allowing such schools to exist;

“The bottom line is that private schools will be recognised and receive government financing regardless of the ideological, religious, political or ethnic motivation behind their establishment.”

Private schools in Denmark, Ministry of Education and Research, Copenhagen [1992]

The 1944 Education Act, section 13, paragraph 2, although not as explicit, appeared to echo similar objectives;

“Where any persons propose that any school established by them or by persons whom they represent which at the time being is not a voluntary school, or any school proposed to be so established, should be maintained by a local education authority, as a voluntary school, they shall after consultation with the authority submit proposals for that purpose to the Minister.”

This study is relevant to my position as chairman of Brixton Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre as I was involved in establishing Iqra Independent Community School which currently exists under the umbrella organisation. The school was set up in September 1994 in view of the state’s failure to cater for the needs of the Muslim children in Lambeth and other neighbouring boroughs.

The school, whilst maintaining its independence, is facing difficulties in regards to resources, both human and financial. This has led me to take up this particular topic as indeed, should my findings point to state funding as a viable option for particular Independent Muslim schools, Iqra will have to review its position, pertaining to the possibility of applying for state funding. If the implications are such that the school’s overall ethos will not be compromised and, outside influences minimised, then strong considerations for funding will need to be made especially bearing in mind the educational climate surrounding the borough of Lambeth at present;

“Lambeth schools are still among London’s worst, with 14 % branded by OFSTED as failing. As parents continue to send their children to neighbouring boroughs, 30 % of secondary school places remain unfilled.”

(Evening Standard, 1st May 1998, p18).

I propose addressing the dissertation in the following way, chapters one and two encompassing my literature review;

Chapter One; So as to familiarise the reader with basic concepts of Islam I shall discuss the importance of the religion's Legislature, its sources and importance in the everyday life of a Muslim, child or adult.

An explanation shall be given as to why some of these tenets cannot be compromised and how, unfortunately misunderstandings and misinterpretation of Islamic Law has resulted in different types of educational institutions being established;

Chapter Two; I will present some of the main arguments for independent Muslim schools. The arguments in favour of Muslim schools generally shall come from a pluralistic as well as Muslim perspective.

Counter arguments will also be presented here, including such arguments for Islam being taught in state schools, without establishing separate institutions for Muslims.

Chapter Three; In this chapter I will discuss the methods and techniques of research to be used and my reasons for using them. I will also highlight the advantages and disadvantages faced when applying the respective methods and techniques.

Chapter Four; This chapter will introduce three case studies; Feversham College for girls, Islamia school and Iqra Primary school. Feversham and Iqra are, at present independent, whereas Islamia is one of the first Muslim schools about to receive state funding. Feversham is in the process of applying for state funding, whilst Iqra intends maintaining its independent status.

To supplement the case studies I shall also introduce the interviews conducted with staff currently working or, having worked in these schools. The interviews are aimed at determining the staff's perception of state funding and its anticipated / likely effects on their respective schools. Muslim teachers currently working, or having worked in state schools with predominantly Muslim populations were also interviewed.

Each school's approach to the National Curriculum and how they have incorporated it, shall be discussed.

Chapter Five; The findings of my research will be discussed here. The common variables between the schools as well, as areas of divergence in the application and understanding of their respective policies and ethos, shall also be reviewed. The results of the interviews will also be discussed, triangulating such findings with those of the case studies.

Conclusion;

I will present my observations in light of the findings of this subject, highlighting the implications of state funding and whether it is in fact a favourable option for Muslim schools and society as a whole. The continuum referred to in chapter one shall be used to gauge the position of the schools studied and whether it is an effective measure to determine the suitability/ viability of Muslim schools considering funding, especially in view of the differing objectives and educational paths they may have decided to traverse.

Shortcomings in preparing this project

In organising this study I am aware of the shortcomings in the area of primary research. Unfortunately I could not overcome this dilemma as, at the time of commencing the project, I was working abroad in the Middle East (Saudi Arabia). This severely limited the scope of such research, meaning that I have had to rely, to a larger extent, on secondary data.

Chapter One: Islam - the complete way of life

“This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.”

Sûrah al Maidah ayah 3 (English rendition of Chapter 5 verse 3 of the Qur'ân)

According to the Muslim world, this verse of the Qur'ân confirms the finality of revelation from Allah, the Creator of everything, and Islam as the Deen (religion and way of life,) to prevail over all other religions / ways of life.

Islam thus organises human life in all its aspects, be it economic, political, cultural or social. Indeed, this has been recognised by non - Muslims as well, amongst them George Bernard Shaw, the Irish philosopher and playwright (1850 - 1956). He made the following observation;

“I do respect the religion of Muhammad for its vivid nature and because it is the only religion that can meet the needs of an ever changing life at all ages. I studied the life of this great man and I would rather call him the ‘Saviour of Mankind’ without any grudge towards Jesus Christ. If Muhammad had reigned this modern world alone, he would have succeeded in solving all the world problems in such a way that it would be a cause of happiness and peace which the world stands in much need. I foretell that this religion of Muhammad will be well received in Europe in future. It has already started receiving acceptance in today’s Europe.” Zino (1996 p175)

Islamic Legislature, or Sharia as it is called, is a divine source of law from Allah, expounded in the Qur'ân and Sunnah (the latter being authentic traditions highlighting the sayings, actions and tacit approvals of prophet Muhammad, pertaining to worship and moral conduct). This law permeates every aspect of a Muslims life;

Islamic law ...is the embodiment of the Islamic ideal life. It is the framework of Islam itself.”

Khadduri (1961, p3)

“Not unlike the idea of natural law in medieval Christendom, Islamic law was regarded as transcendental and perfect. In contrast with positive law, Islamic law was revealed in a supernatural way and for a super mundane purpose. The jus divinum was regarded as the ideal, eternal and just, designed for all time and characterised by its universal application to all men. The ideal life was the life led in the strictest conformity with this law.”

Khadduri (1961 p44)

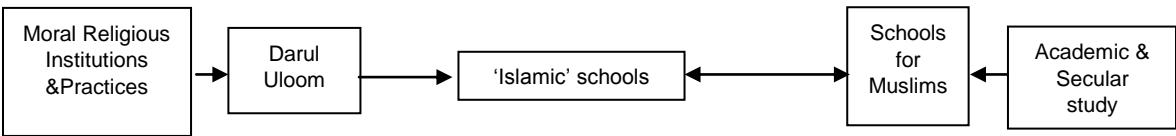
One may retort that Muslims cannot practice Islam in its entirety in a non - Muslim society and that they have to abide by the law of the land. This does not, in any way, contradict Khadduri’s observation. In fact he continues by stating;

“In theory the divine law preceded the State and was independent of man’s own existence. The State was created to enforce the law, but if it fails to do so - and in such a case the State forfeits its raison d’être - the individual still remains under an obligation to observe the law, even in the absence of anyone to enforce it. The sanction of the law, which is distinct from the validity of that law, need not exist. For the object of the law is to provide for the individual the right path (Sharia), or ideal life, regardless of the proper authority to enforce it.” (p.44)

The cultivation of such penetrating and all encompassing values need to be instilled at a relatively young age, hence the Muslim community’s insistence on the establishment of Muslim schools. These schools would provide a suitable environment for the students.

Today’s society has become accustomed to distinguishing between secular and religious education, separating the two where ever possible. This has led to a stronger emphasis on secular education, to the detriment of the religious aspects. The results of this imbalance are evident in society, especially amongst the youth. Examples that can be cited are the rise in youth crime, promiscuity, (conveniently referred to by some as Liberalism), an increase in divorce rates alongside a decline in marriages.

Islamic education does not accommodate such a division as indeed, both academic / secular education and religion form an integral part of each other. Muslim educationalists and / or community leaders who have attempted to focus on one strand have done so to the detriment of the other. By providing a continuum highlighting the extremes of these strands I shall be able to describe the current position of some of the Muslim schools / educational institutions more clearly:



This continuum shall become the measure by which to determine the position of the case studies, to be discussed in chapter four.

Moral Religious Institutions and Practices

These institutions are, by and large, the mosques and Islamic centres. They are often the backbone of a local community and become the ‘stepping stone’ for other projects. Activities include the five daily prayers, Islamic studies and Qur’ânic recitation. Classes for students attending full - time schools

usually take place late afternoon / early evening. It is from these *madrassahs* that the *Dar ul Uloom* (literal translation: Place of sciences) stem from.

Dar ul Uloom

Dar ul Uloom's initial focus was on teaching Islam; however an increasing number have begun to include secular subjects in their curriculum. A strong emphasis would be on memorisation of the Qur'ân and learning many of the Islamic sciences. Knowledge of secular / academic subjects had to be acquired from other institutions of education.

Before describing the ideal, balanced '*Islamic school*' it is necessary to describe the other extreme of the continuum.

Academic & Secular study

The position of academic / secular study is clear. This refers to state educational and non denominational institutions from nursery schools right up to universities, covering a wide range of studies, at varying levels. These institutions promote multi - faith policies in an attempt to tolerate all types of religious practice. In doing this they encompass the sea of European and British legislation which purports to support multi - culturalism. Williams (1981, p236) characterised multicultural education using three key assumptions;

- (a) that by learning his cultural and ethnic "roots" an ethnic child will improve his educational achievement;
- (b) the closely related claim that learning about his culture, its traditions and so on will improve equality of opportunity and;
- (c) that learning about other cultures will reduce children's (and adults) prejudice and discrimination towards those from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

In fact, these assumptions formed the bed rock of the multi - cultural education policy during the 1970' and 80's.

School for Muslims

The '*School for Muslims*' has been placed next to this extreme because in some areas, e.g. Tower Hamlets and Bradford, the Muslims attending state schools form the overall majority. These schools have to abide by rules imposed by the State, such as adherence to the National Curriculum. Whilst an '*inferred curriculum*' may exist, thereby facilitating some of the Islamic requirements of the children, they still have to abide by the multi - faith policies and doctrines in accordance with government stipulations.

The second type of 'School for Muslims' is, in essence, the same as any other school but is independent, run by Muslims and populated by Muslim children alone. A vague thread of Islamic principles may form a superficial part of the ethos, however the most noticeable aspect of the school is the absence of multi-faith doctrines and policies by which the school would otherwise have to abide. This second type shall be one of the focuses of the study.

Islamic School

Perhaps the most balanced perspective is the '**Islamic school**' at the centre of the continuum where; **"Academic subjects, whilst important, are taught on a par close to but not exceeding the Islamic Curriculum."** [Baker (1997 p4)]. In addition to this, the Islamic school would avoid the division of secular and religious education. Islam would indeed, permeate every aspect of the school curriculum. It would form the basis of every subject. This type of school would offer the sort of education envisaged by section 1 (2) (a) of the 1988 Education Reform Act;

"...a balanced curriculum which... promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society."

The misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the Sharia is another reason, amongst the reasons alluded to earlier, for the emergence of different types of Muslim schools i.e. some schools concentrating more on asceticism (Sufism), others focusing on political issues (Ikhwanul Muslimeen – [Muslim Brotherhood]) etc. Although Islam is thought provoking, it does not allow for the development of methodologies based upon misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Islamic guidelines are clear regarding the extent to which co-operation or compromise, whichever the case, within societies alien to its practice, can be negotiated.

Muslim educationalists need to consider exactly what they can and cannot do, for example, does the Sharia allow for governing committees to consist of Muslims and non-Muslims alike (the LEAs for example who, under the new legislation play an integral part of state funded schools -[TES, 20th February 1998]), especially where decisions pertaining to the religious practice of the school have to be made? Can Muslim institutions really belong to Muslims when they are funded largely by the State? Such questioning is likely to cause consternation, amongst advocates for state funding for instance, but it must be emphasised that the Sharia cannot be adjusted to suit personal or collective ambitions / agendas however noble they may appear. Many would argue that the Sharia supports their perspective, thus justifying their cause. If the cause is in compliance with the Sharia and the understanding that prevails the latter then it (the cause) should be furthered;

“And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger (Muhammad) after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the believers’ (companions of Muhammad) way, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen....”

Sûrah An - Nisa ayat 115 (Chapter 4 verse 115 of the Qur’ân, English rendition)

In concluding this chapter it is necessary to comment that Muslim educationalists have a duty to see that the advancement of education for their community in Britain is in accordance with the requirements of the Universal Law, namely the Sharia.

Chapter Two: Arguments supporting the establishment of independent Muslim schools.

Supporting arguments will be presented from two perspectives; Pluralist and Muslim. My purpose here is to illustrate the similarities between the two perspectives, acknowledging any differences.

This chapter should thus provide the reader with a premise as to why independent Muslim schools exist today.

Counter arguments, and their worth, in light of the arguments being presented here, shall then follow.

Part 1: The Pluralist perspective.

It is necessary to divide this perspective into different sections whereby two related concepts can be considered;

- A) Cultural pluralism and;
- B) Cultural relativism

A description will now ensue as to what these concepts actually are and how they support the case for independent Muslim schools.

According to Halstead, (1986 p6), Cultural pluralism refers to; “... ***the acceptance within a society of differences in the beliefs, values and traditions to which members of that society have a commitment.***”

Amongst the principles of Cultural Pluralism is that each group has the right to retain its distinctive culture so long as it does not conflict with the shared values of the society as a whole.

The education of each child should, in view of this principle, include knowledge of the diversity of lifestyles and cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds, which comprise today's society.

The concept of Cultural Pluralism, with its underlying principles, appears straight forward. It contains nothing that opposes the establishment of separate Muslim schools. Having said this, any effects would invariably depend on the *type* of Muslim school that was being established, (refer to the continuum in chapter one, page 7). For such principles to be applicable in a Muslim school it would have to adopt the position of the ‘*school for Muslims*’ simply because of the less stringent religious emphasis that would exist in this type of school. The more mid - stream ‘*Islamic school*’ or ‘*Dar ul Uloom*’ are likely to reject some principles of Cultural Pluralism, especially where the acceptance of and, participation in shared values, is required. The problem arises when actually defining what ‘shared values’ are. These could well differ from culture to culture, society to society, religion to religion. For example, homosexuality is today considered a ‘shared value’, albeit outwardly. The Christian faith, whose doctrines strongly

oppose this, has now 'accepted' such relationships, publicly advocating them. The Church has accepted this as the 'norm,' a value that is shared by the wider society.

The point being made here is that this particular principle could never, in totality, be accepted by the majority of Muslims. However a minority, intent on achieving the objective of establishing a Muslim school might well, inadvertently, accept this value under the guise of the Equal Opportunities policy which stipulates, amongst other values, a policy of acceptance towards individuals irrespective of their sexual orientation.

Halstead (1986) also questions the problematical concept of 'shared values', querying what would actually happen in the event of disagreement over fundamental values. Shared values, again therefore, takes on a variety of meanings for different cultures.

A clear example of shared values can be seen from the following article which is proof as to why this concept is unworkable in an Islamic environment. The tabloid newspaper, 'The Independent' published an article entitled; "**Children from all faiths tell the Christmas Story.**" It went on to report that;

"Today it is common for children of other religions to take part in nominally Christian events. As well as appearing in nativity plays, Muslims, Hindu and Sikh children learn to sing carols, send Christmas cards and make Advent calendars.... At other times of the year, the whole school recognises different festivals..." (14th December 1992 p.10)

At least, as Halstead observes; "**Separatism is at least an open statement of bias rather than cultural domination in disguise...**" (1986, p.9). Such an observation is apt in view of the article referred to.

B) Cultural Relativism

In principle, this concerns the various perceptions of cultural groups as to what is of educational value to their respective groups. In other words, what is perceived to be of educational value within one group is likely to be viewed differently by the other. The relativism applies when each group is allowed to pursue what it perceives to be of value.

The concept of Cultural Relativism provides another argument for the establishment of separate Muslim schools as it suggests that it is impossible to gain more than a superficial understanding of cultural / religious beliefs without being, in some way committed to them. Thus, a selection of the most important elements pertaining to the culture / religion can only be made, and presented, by someone from within.

Zec, (1980), Feyerabend (1978) and Halstead (1986), amongst others, define Cultural Relativism as being either 'strong' or 'weak'; “ **Strong relativism implies that an activity can be understood to be good or worth pursuing only relative to a specifiable person or group; nothing can be considered valuable or good in itself, and there are no absolute truths which cross cultural barriers; truth is simply what is accepted by a particular cultural group, and rationality itself is culture bound.**” Halstead (1986 p10)

Weak Relativism, in contrast, does not imply that anything goes. Rather, it involves the realisation that one's view may be part of a greater scheme, be it a major component or minor one. Weak relativism focuses on aspects that are specific but not generally universal. This type of relativism would, so far as education is concerned permit the following;

- 1 the exclusion of anything influenced with relativism from the school, i.e. moral, aesthetic and religious beliefs, except those common to all cultures;
- 2 the maintenance through education of a dominant culture, justification of this being on the premise that it is important for pupils to gain significant knowledge of cultural and religious values. The pupil, at the same time, would have to develop a commitment to a particular value system and ;
- 3 the institution of separate but equal educational programmes for the transmission within a particular cultural group, of its own beliefs. This would be provided alongside a more general education.

Halstead makes the assumption that this third aspect of relativism is the only one compatible with the principles of Cultural Pluralism, and that it has been this particular aspect the Muslim community has requested to establish independent (and as the case presently stands, state funded) Muslim schools.

In summary, “**Dynamic pluralism... is compatible with weak relativism...**” (Halstead 1986, p12), and therefore provides an opportunity for the existence of separate schools as a legitimate target for the Muslim community.

Martin (1976) and Bullivant (1984) suggested that cultural pluralism must be accompanied by 'Structural pluralism' so that it is not rendered impotent. Structural pluralism would enable cultural / religious groups to establish separate educational institutions to serve the distinctive needs of the minority communities. Muslim schools would thus be able to establish schools which could provide an alternative to an increasingly secular education.

Bullivant (1984, p71) further observes, when looking at the plight of Aboriginal Australians;

“Reliance solely on a naive form of cultural pluralism will not alleviate the discrimination these people and many members of other ethnic groups still experience. Structural and institutional pluralism must accompany it, but inevitably this will be resisted as much as possible by the dominant Anglo - Celtic majority.”

Proof of this observation can be seen as recently as 10th January 1998, when The Reverend David Streater, secretary of the Church Society referred to the “serious consequences” of state funding for Muslim schools;

“Islam is not a quiescent faith... and this will be seen as a foot in the door. We may be an increasingly secular society, but this is still a generally Christian country and we have to defend that.” (The Times, p2).

In light of this, Bullivant’s observation could be said to have equal validity for the Muslim community in Britain today.

PART 2: The Muslim perspective

In chapter one the importance of the Sharia (Islamic Legislature) in the lives of Muslims and how essential it is to have this instilled at a young age was discussed. This is one of the primary reasons for them wanting to establish their own schools and in contrast to the view expressed by Halstead (1986, p15);

“... the powerful resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism ... is affecting not only the structure of Muslim countries like Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, but also the thinking of minority communities.... in the West.”

Islamic fundamentalism should be understood in the context of adhering to the fundamental tenets of the religion and not be confused with fanaticism.

From a Muslim perspective education about life after death - the Hereafter - is as important as education about this earthly, more temporal life.

Subsequent reasons for establishing these type of schools inevitably follow, the most significant of them being discussed now.

There has been increasing dissatisfaction, amongst the Muslim community, over the years in respect of the quality of supplementary education provided for its children. Ironically these provisions have been largely laid on by the Muslim community itself. After school and weekend classes where children are taught to recite the Qur'ân and general Islamic studies (known as Madrassahs) form the basis of supplementary education. In fact it is from these schools that some of the first Dar ul Uloom type centres sprung. The Madrassahs were supposed to fill the gap created by state schools in the area of spiritual and moral development. Dissatisfaction developed as a result of the additional financial burden placed upon the community and the academic pressure forced on those children attending the extra lessons. (Darsh [1980], El Tom [1981,p41], Khan - Cheema [1984]). Children were in no fit state, after attending state schools for a whole day, to turn up for these extra curricular activities. It is unsurprising, therefore, that they were reluctant to attend or progress in what could be considered unfavourable circumstances.

The extent of the children's Islamic development compared to the secular education was thus minimal, exposing them, for a greater part of their youth, to secularism. Unfortunately the good intended by the supplementary education backfired.

The aforementioned circumstances, coupled with the apparent shortcomings of state education heightened the call for Muslim schools, both independent and state funded.

By setting up such schools the Muslim community attempted to establish two principles as rights for their children;

1. access to the opportunities offered by a general education, which includes living as full British citizens without fear of racism or other forms of prejudice. Also, their children being able to compete in the employment market on equal footing to non - Muslims and generally, benefit from the society's scientific and technological progress;
2. the preservation, maintenance and transmission of their distinctive culture, beliefs and values.

These principles are, on the surface, acceptable to British society. In fact, the first principle is an acknowledged aim of contemporary State education in Britain, supported by the European Convention of Human Rights (Article 14). Whilst this principle is acceptable at this level, when considering it specifically amongst the existing Madrassah system of education, it cannot be facilitated. Similarly, the second principle, which is easily facilitated by the Madrassah type school, could not be entertained in totality within contemporary State education.

The only way of combining the two principles was by establishing independent Muslim schools. From the Muslim perspective, there was simply no other way of achieving this combination. To ignore this would have meant leaving Muslim education split at opposite ends of the secular / religious spectrum. Proof of the combination of the two said principles being combined can be witnessed in the objectives of one established Independent Muslim school, which is currently applying for State funding;

“... members of staff over the years developed a school ethos which allows all those involved in the school to enhance their self esteem, build their confidence, nurture their Islamic identity and pursue excellence in their endeavours.”

It continued by highlighting the Governor's expectations of senior staff, defining;

“... a broad curriculum to be offered by the school which takes into consideration the whole of the National Curriculum while giving students the opportunity to understand how best to live as British Muslim Citizens within a predominantly non - Muslim multicultural society.”

(Feversham College Girls School, Bradford; application for Voluntary Aided Status, 1994, p.6)

The call for Muslim schools is also a reflection of concern over the decline in moral standards and religious commitment within society. Some educationalists are beginning to see the Muslim community playing a more significant role towards raising the societies awareness of moral and religious values in

an increasingly secular society, (Khan - Cheema [1984, p.7]). This observation is in line with George Bernard Shaw's statement, referred to in the preceding chapter.

Religion has been reduced in significance due to the growing emphasis on scientific progress and material prosperity. Islam vehemently opposes such an imbalance as an equilibrium between spiritual, moral, material and indeed, every aspect of life, has to be maintained;

“O our Lord, grant us good in this Dunya (life of this world) and good in the Akhirah (life of the hereafter) and save us from the punishment of the (Hell) Fire.”

Sûrah Al Baqarah (ayat 201) [The Qur'ân, Chapter 2, verse 201]

Both the life of this world and the Hereafter are mentioned an equal amount of times in the Qur'ân. This highlights, for the Muslims, the balance that Allah is emphasising one must have in concentrating upon / preparing for both lives. One should not be neglected at the expense of the other, i.e. either become too engrossed with material matters or, on the other hand become extremely ascetic, shunning the most basic luxuries of life. Again, only Muslim schools have the ability to provide this balance.

Table 2: A contrast between the Principles of Islamic Education and Western Secular Education [as perceived by Muslims]; Source Halstead (1986 p.20)

Principles	Islamic Model	Secular Model
Aim of education	The good man	The rational man*
Highest personal values	Spiritual wisdom	Material well-being, happiness
Nature of morality	Divine law	Relativism or subjectivism
Focus of values	Community of believers	Individual fulfillment
Nature of reality	Unity [of God, humanity, religion and knowledge]**	Diversity and pluralism
Attitude to man	God's earthly vice-gerent***	A self-sufficient being
Source of knowledge	Revelation	Reason, the experimental method
Foundation of belief	Authority	Rational autonomy
Attitude to belief	Certainty	Doubt, critical openness
Approach to religion	Commitment, faith	Scepticism
Valued state of mind	Submission, reverence	Pride, ambition
View of multiculturalism	Moral chaos****	Healthy pluralism

The table presented by Halstead represents a heuristic typology of the education system of Islam and Western Europe which can be used as a means of identifying immediate differences between the two. As an ideal, it is subject to criticism. Although a few of the criticisms are highlighted below a lengthy discourse on the same, at this stage, is beyond the remit of this project;

* Arguably the concept of the 'rational man' no longer exists in today's society;

**This belief is uncommon to mainstream Islam and is, therefore, a minority belief (amongst the Sufi sect for example);

*** This should refer to man's subservience to God, away from any representation of the former for the latter on earth;

**** Muslim schools are at the forefront of multi - cultural education but against the 'chaos' of multi - faith ethics.

Cultural Relativism, strong relativism in particular, supports the Muslim argument. This is in so far as recognising the importance of enabling persons or groups to pursue that which is deemed essential to their beliefs and values. The only short coming in is in regard to the failure to recognise absolute truths crossing cultural boundaries specific to that person or group. When observing the three Asiatic religions, otherwise known as the Abrahamic faiths, for example, we see that fundamentally they all share the same belief in one absolute truth - the existence of God, the Creator. However, it is the **Tawheed** [Phillips 1990] (i.e. not associating any partners, be they a son, mother, image, idol etc.) thus avoiding polytheism that differs.

Both the Pluralistic and Muslim perspectives clearly show how the Islamic concept of education / development for its children is a realistic and practicable one. The fact that there are now more than fifty independent Muslim schools, (Education Research and Resource Centre, London [1996] and The Times, 10th January 1998, p.2), confirms the strength and validity of these arguments. Having said this it is still necessary to consider the arguments against such schools, and their validity in today's society.

Part 3: Arguments against the establishment of Muslim schools

In view of the many changes made to the National Curriculum and the introduction of the Education Reform Act 1988, children from all cultures and religions are more widely catered for. For example, Muslim pupils, especially in boys schools can attend the Jumua (Friday congregational) prayer; they are allowed to take off religious holidays and Halal meat is provided in some schools. Aspects of the National Curriculum that are at odds with Islam can be omitted and amendments are permitted in subjects, such as geography, to include places of interest thereby making the subject more appropriate to the student. These are a few of the allowances made for Muslim children in particular.

Some educationalists argue that, in view of such far reaching changes over the past fifteen to twenty years in particular, establishing independent schools of any kind contributes to causing a division between cultures and religions in what is clearly a multi cultural society. More specifically arguments have been put forward that separate Muslim schools are socially divisive in this society, (Asian Youth Movement, Bradford, 1983).

Segments of the Muslim community have feared that separate schools would further alienate their children. This might, in turn, result in what the National Union of Teachers,(NUT, 1984, p.1) described as **“ghettoising”** the Muslim community. The result would prove catastrophic, especially in view of the Muslim community’s efforts to assimilate, sharing some of the common values prevalent in the wider society. The knock on effect would be to facilitate discrimination against Muslims in the employment market and, on the whole, increase the difficulties of Muslim children growing up in the society.

The Swann Report (p510) echoed similar concerns about separate schools for Muslims saying they might;

“...exacerbate the very feelings of rejection and of not being accepted as full members of our society which they were seeking to overcome.”

It is, perhaps surprising to note the concern expressed here in the Swann Report, particularly bearing in mind the statement made earlier in their report which expressed, more blatantly, their concern over Muslim schools as a threat to the; **“... stability and cohesion of society as a whole.”** (HMSO 1985 p.7)

It is no surprise why the Muslim community views such reports with suspicion, considering comments like this. In fact, the concern here appeared to be more in relation to society’s response to Muslims having their own schools and not the welfare of the Muslim community.

Further counter arguments include the claim that there is a need to keep Muslim children in multicultural schools, so as to help the white majority shed its racist tendencies, (Swann Report, p. 510). This

observation is offensive, to say the least, and smacks of exploitative tendencies towards a minority religion in Britain.

Another argument is that Muslim schools will be used as institutions promoting undemocratic methodologies, such as the indoctrination of children. In fact, liberal educationists consider this to be the worst thing to do educationally to children. They hold personal autonomy to be **the** major priority of education, (Halstead 1986). Some of the counter arguments pertaining to indoctrination shall be made below;

1. ***“Schools which have the ‘intention of committing children to a set of beliefs.... are guilty of indoctrination...”*** (Barrow 1891 p.150) ***“... particularly if the aim is to make the beliefs unshakeable ones.”*** (White 1967, p.189, Flew 1972, p.75);

2. Indoctrination is immoral because, ultimately it implies a lack of respect for persons by denying them; ***“... independence and control over their lives.”*** (Kleinig 1982, p.65);

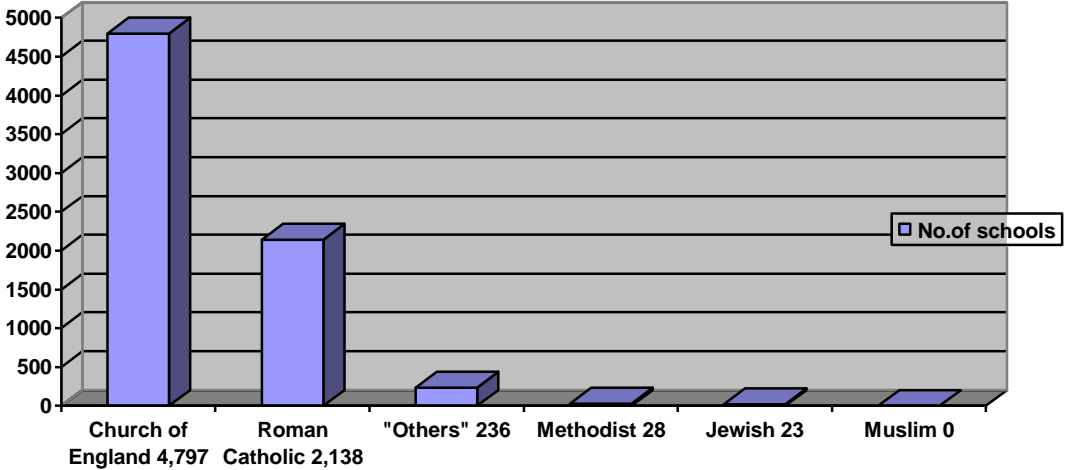
3. Religious instruction is a model case of indoctrination; Flew (1972, p.106) observes that; ***“ The most successful programme of indoctrination is that schools which maintain their separate and independent existence precisely in order to inculcate belief in the doctrines...”*** In this regard he was referring specifically to the Roman Catholic Church.

The counter arguments presented here have been viewed by some as being smokescreens, hiding the real reasons for not wanting independent Muslim schools, State funded ones in particular. Indeed, arguments like those referring to the provisions made for Muslim pupils in state schools can be considered to be tokenism alongside piecemeal concessions by the education authorities, perhaps in an attempt to stem the tide of calls for separate Muslim schools.

The feared ‘social divide’ and racist backlash has not taken place to date. Instead the society has witnessed a harmonisation between the Muslim religion and itself. Popular examples that can be cited of the society’s **tolerance** of Islam can be seen in the marriage of Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith, a famous Muslim cricketer and the other, part of British aristocracy. Another example can be seen in the untimely death of another, more popular member of British aristocracy, Diana - Princess of Wales and her partner, a well known Muslim figure, Dodi Fayed, the late son of Mohammed al Fayed, owner of Harrods.

The arguments pertaining to indoctrination could be used, to an extent in relation to state schools as indeed, multi - faith ethics, which go hand in hand with multi - culturalism, prevalent throughout such

schools is viewed by many to be a means by which to strip and confuse children about basic universal concepts of the major religions. In addition to this the arguments against 'schools of indoctrination', no matter how old they may be, have not prevented the establishment of numerous independent schools from a variety of denominations. Such schools are mostly funded by the State.



State funded religious schools in England (January 1996) – Source: DfEE Statistical Branch

The table above provides a stark picture of the reality regarding state funding for Muslim schools, up until 9th January 1998.

Chapter three: Methodology for research

In view of earlier primary research in areas such as the National Curriculum, and its relation to Muslim pupils needs etc. it has not been necessary to develop or produce fresh data in this particular field. One of the purposes of this study is to gauge the changes that will affect a Muslim school wishing to become state funded and whether it shifts along the continuum, described in chapter one, thus altering its ethos and other religious principles. Thus far, I am unaware of any research in this domain.

The Case study style of research has been adopted because, overall, it acts as; “... ***an umbrella term for a family of research methods having in common the decision to focus on inquiry around an instance.***” Adelman et al (1977 pp139 - 150)

This style enables the extrapolation of existing primary research and enough scope to apply other commonly used techniques such as Participant observation, documentary analysis and interviews.

As mentioned earlier, focus shall be upon three cases, all having reached different stages of development. I shall describe the common variables between these schools and the point /s at which these variables become divergent.

In respect of one of the studies, (namely Feversham College), I intend relying more upon documentary evidence, due to the shortcomings and time constraints referred to at the beginning of this project. Such evidence is fairly substantial as it covers one of the school's recent applications for state funding.

The second case study shall be that of Islamia School in Brent. This was actually the first Muslim school in London and therefore, served as a pioneering / pilot school. Again, I intend relying largely upon documentary evidence.

The third and final case study (of Iqra), shall be more extensive in the use of research techniques. This is due to the accessibility of raw data available from the school and my continuing involvement in its development.

On the whole, the right ingredients are present for the type of research I have chosen, these being; “... ***a particular contemporary phenomena within its real life context...***” (Robson [1993, p.52]), ‘*the particular*’ being the specific cases in question and the ‘*phenomena*’ in context being the issue of state funding and its implications for Muslim schools in Britain.

In choosing the techniques by which I intend effecting my research, it is necessary that I discuss their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Participant Observation

My position as Chairman of the umbrella organisation under which one of the case studies, Iqra independent school, belongs provides me with the unequivocal role as participant / observer. The participatory and observatory roles are dual in their function. My involvement in the overall progression of the organisation has allowed me to be fully conversant with its overall development, thus alleviating the process of familiarisation and acclimatisation, often the procedure for researchers embarking upon this type of research.

“A major advantage of observation as a technique is its directness. You do not ask people about their views, feelings or attitudes; you watch what they do and listen to what they say.”

Robson (1993 p.191)

Other advantages are immediate, such as my presence as a member of the organisation. I need not employ strategies of infiltration, (as in the case of Festinger et al [1956]), amongst unknown and unsuspecting groups or individuals in order to effect any form of observation. My colleagues are fully aware of my general observations as a researcher for this project. I am therefore able to avoid research from a ***“covert or manipulative perspective not generally acceptable.”*** (Kirby and McKenna [1989,p.78]). My colleagues are then able to continue with their duties unhindered and to a greater extent, unaffected by my involvement in this regard.

Observations shall, by and large, be descriptive, adopting some of the Descriptive Observation Dimensions described by Spradley (1980, p118).

Disadvantages

In using this technique I am aware that it is, largely, unstructured and unsystematic. It is more of a narrative account based on events with which I have been involved. As a descriptive technique, it is exposed to criticism from a quantitative perspective.

In addition to this, my position in the organisation points heavily to the risk of observational bias, as well as participatory influence. The former type of bias would emanate from what could be considered the unavoidable perceptual process of selectivity, i.e. concentration on some aspects to the detriment of others. Interpersonal factors, such as my strong relationship with some members of the organisation

and the weaker, less involved relationship with others, are amongst the other disadvantages in using this technique.

My participatory influence could affect the events taking place around me increasing the risk of steering such events towards a result / outcome suitable for my initiatives.

As Robson (1993, p.202), points out, knowing what distortions and biases are likely to occur should help in counteracting them. With this in mind I have endeavoured to do the following;

- 1 limit my involvement on the School Governing Committee to one where I simply relay information from the trustees and thereafter listen to the discussions that ensue;
- 2 concentrate, as far as is possible, on all aspects surrounding the focus of this particular case study and;
- 3 reducing the extent of the consultative process with the closer, more influential members involved in this case study and opening the door to more consultation with the members with less influence / involvement with myself.

Documentary Analysis (Content Analysis)

This technique is an indirect form of research to be effected on documentation produced for reasons other than that of research. As an unobtrusive method, I cannot affect the process of development, especially in case studies one and two, because such processes have already been established. The documentation available confirms this fact.

Content analysis, therefore, provides a structured observation on hard data, countering somewhat the unstructured approach of participant observation, discussed earlier.

In case study one, (Feversham College), I shall concentrate on documents relating to the school's 1994 application for state funding, which should provide curriculum outlines, ethos and objectives and financial forecasts amongst other information I propose using.

In case study two, (Islamia school), I intend relying upon the most recent public document available, this being the Grant Maintained Proposal. This document should provide a wealth of important information, relevant to all other Muslim schools intending to, or currently applying for state funding.

In case study three, (IQRA school), I shall use the policy documents which highlight the ethos and objectives. Other documentation will include marketing plans, curriculum development programmes and their like.

Advantages

In addition to the technique being unobtrusive, as already mentioned above, other advantages include the fact that the data is permanent, (especially in case two). There is no need for further re- analysis.

Disadvantages

One obvious disadvantage, so far as case study one is concerned is the limited and somewhat dated documentation that is available. In the light of the most recent developments regarding Muslim schools, it would be ideal to access any recent documentation / new applications made by Feversham.

A further disadvantage, alluded to earlier, is that all documentation has been prepared for reasons other than that of research and, therefore, it is difficult to allow for the inevitable distortions or biases that permeate such documents.

Finally, documentary analysis does not permit the accurate assessment of causal relationships, i.e. are the documents produced causes of the social phenomena of interest, or reflections of them?

In attempting to effectively balance the two techniques discussed, I have also decided to use the interview technique. This would then enable me to triangulate all the methods of research used under the case study umbrella, providing what I hope to be equilibrium between the techniques and their respective findings.

Interviews

My criterion for the teachers interviewed was that they had worked, or were currently teaching in the Muslim schools, the subject of this study.

These interviews are a means to supplement the existing documentary evidence and as such, provide a rich, if not, poignant source of information due to the teachers first hand experience of the environment and circumstances surrounding their respective schools.

The semi - structured style of interview was chosen, which permits the modification of the order of questioning based on my; ***"... perception of what seems most appropriate in the context of the 'conversation'..."*** (Robson [1993, p231]).

Advantages

The advantages of interviews are that they are a flexible, adaptable way of enquiry. They can open previously closed doors, ideas and lines of new enquiry. In this instance they can act as a source of supplementary data, confirming or negating patterns that are already likely to exist in, say, documentary evidence for example.

These interviews should provide a more 'hands on' approach, reflective of the current environment and changes to Muslim education. Finally, interviews are less likely to be misinterpreted or misunderstood than the other techniques used in this project, (Participant observation and Documentary analysis). However, at the same time one must be aware of the disadvantages.

Disadvantages

Bias can still exist in the way questions are structured or even asked, leading the interviewee down a particular, unsuspecting path.

Also, whilst adopting what I believe to be the middle road between a completely structured interview and totally informal one, the concern surrounding the reliability of interviews still remain. Interviews are yet another 'soft' technique which poses the potential problem of providing qualitative data, difficult to analyse.

Another aspect that, in the eyes of traditional research, would be considered a disadvantage was in respect of the restricted nature of the interviews so far as gender is concerned. In this particular project I have only been able to interview one female Muslim teacher. Due to the understandably strict guidelines prohibiting mixing between the sexes it has been difficult interviewing Muslim women, who form the majority of teachers amongst the Muslim community.

Thus, one may pose the argument that the interviews do not provide an accurate reflection of what Muslim teachers feel in regards to state funding in relation to my research. However, this could be countered by the simple fact that the main objectives of Muslim education are the same and are being promoted by Muslim teachers, whatever their sex.

The overall resultant effect of the research methods discussed in this chapter would be to triangulate the data obtained. Robson, (1993, p.383), cites triangulation as a means of testing one source of information against other sources. If the sources confer then, to some extent, they cross validate each other. On the other hand, if a discrepancy arises, the investigation may help towards explaining the phenomenon of interest.

Triangulation will contribute towards removing the concerns over the trustworthiness of the qualitative data obtained and thus, provide more credibility to my findings.

Chapter four: Case studies

The strategic analysis for each case will be divided into three sections; i) the environment, ii) resources and strategic capability and, iii) stakeholder expectations. The findings of such analysis will be discussed in the next chapter.

Case study 1: Feversham College

The environment

Feversham College is situated in the city of Bradford, Yorkshire. Bradford has the largest Muslim population in the U.K. The 1991 census of the population in Bradford confirmed that, amongst the thirty wards / districts, the Asian population amounted to 60, 646; 48,935 coming from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities. It should be noted that these communities are Muslim. Amongst the remaining 11,707 Indians there would still be a significant number of Muslims.

The overall population of Asians was taken from amongst a total count of 457,344; 386,025 being British nationals.

The following STEP analysis will provide a clearer framework of the environmental factors affecting Feversham College;

Socio - Cultural

The school was started in September 1984 after parents from the Muslim community recognised the need for their children to be educated in a more Islamic environment. The vision statement of therefore reflects this position;

“To provide the best quality of education within a secure Islamic learning environment.”

Application for Voluntary Status, [1994] Part 2, page 6

The school's primary objective was to accommodate students from the local Muslim community. It would not, however, refuse to allocate places to non - Muslim students.

Feversham was established as an independent primary and secondary school, fees being charged at rates ranging between fifty to five hundred pounds per annum. This depended solely upon the financial circumstances of those parents sending their children to the school.

In 1994 the number of children attending school was 178, with over 200 on the waiting list. The LEA schools in Bradford provided places for a total of 88,921, pupils. (Part 1, p.6 of application). The number of pupils on Bradford city's school roll (NOR), between 1991 - 1993 highlighted a progressive increase and, as expected a steady decline in the surplus places. Although some schools were projected to have spare capacity, (surplus places), they would still not be in a position to accommodate an increase in pupils for the following reasons;

- 1 One school, (Grange Upper School), had to reduce its pupil number from 385 to 271, in order to reflect the actual accommodation available;
- 2 Fairfax Upper School was the subject of a public notice to reduce its admission level, again reflecting the actual accommodation available and;
- 3 Eccleshill Upper School was, at the time, projected to continue its increase in roll up to the year 2000, when it is estimated that there will be a 116.4% capacity in use.

The general expansion in the school age population would, thus necessitate further expansion / new provision in this particular sector. (Part 2, point 6, p12 of application).

Technological

In Feversham's bid for state funding it highlighted the need for technological expansion so far as premises pertaining to class room use / size was concerned. The brief made for the architects and Quantity Surveyor in the application reiterated the school's "**... attempts to provide an educational rationale for the re - designing of the split site college... to meet the changing requirements of those who will work at Feversham...**" (Part 5, p25 of application).

Economical

Reference was made, under the Socio - Cultural sub heading, to the fees collected for the school, amounting to between 50 - 500 a year. This was not enough to maintain the running costs of the school, especially taking into account the relatively small number of pupils attending, i.e. 178. Considering the fact that "**teachers' salaries account for half the cost of education, and non teaching staff salaries raise the total wage bill to nearly two thirds of total expenditure...**" (Gray [1984,p210]), it is not surprising that the school was running at a loss. This was occasionally helped by other Islamic organisations, such as U.K. Islamic Education Waqf (UKIEW), which supported ventures of this kind as well as sponsoring school fees for families assessed to be in need.

Feversham's proposals for development of its sites were as follows;

- 1 Gross capital costs for Feversham site - £ 506,653
Ryan Street site - £ 104, 095

- 2 Cost of work necessary to secure implementation of proposals - Feversham site - £ 277,473
Ryan Street site- £ 56,595

- 3 Cost of other work - Feversham site - £ 229,180
Ryan Street site - £ 47,500

The school would, upon receiving state funding (Voluntary Aided Status at the time), be required to contribute 15% towards the overall costs highlighted above.

Political / Legal

Despite the school being established since 1984, it was not until January 1990 that it was successful in its application for registration, confirming that the premises were suitable and the general function / activities met the standards required by law. (Bradford Star newspaper 25th January 1990, p19).

The political climate surrounding Feversham at the time of its application was tense due to the Conservative government's continued refusal to accept any Muslim school's application for state funding. In contrast to this the government had been seen to provide funding for other denominational schools;

“ The law allows schools which are still at the planning stage to apply for voluntary aided status and, in the late 1980's and early 90's a couple of Jewish schools were granted such status before they had even opened their doors.” A.A. Ahmed (1995, p.19).

When the Under Secretary of State for Education, Robin Squire wrote to MP Max Madden (16 th February 1995), explaining the subsequent rejection of Feversham's application for funding he stated that it was not ready to join the maintained sector. This was on the premise that fire precautions had not been met!

Prior to this, the Muslim community had observed, with surprise, in 1987 the reasons stated by Kirklees council in Yorkshire for not supporting Zakaria's application for state funding. In the conclusion of the advisory document it stated; “ **More difficult to gauge are the less direct effects and ideological**

consequences which would follow the establishment of the Authority's first aided school which has Islam as its ethos." By July 1988, when the document was made public, the word ideological had been omitted.

Once again, there was sufficient proof to highlight the bias against Muslim schools becoming state funded.

Competitive Rivalry

Despite the existence of forty seven independent schools in Bradford alone (Part 1, p.6 of application), not one of them were Muslim. Rivalry may be viewed from the perspective of some of these schools being predominantly Muslim populated, whose ethos was non -Islamic.

The success of Feversham would provide a basis for other Muslim schools nationally.

Resources and Strategic Capability

Human Resources: There is very little information relating to staff, except those areas which are indicative of their work / performance, such as the standard of education given and the success of the pupils in their exams. In the letters of support commendation has been given to the high standard of education.

Concerns were raised however by HM inspectors when they attended the school in February 1990 of the potential overload of work on the newly appointed Head teacher, whom they praised for raising the overall standard of the school.

It is clear from this report that all subjects were being taught adequately, with a few subjects, (English language for example), requiring slight improvement. (Verbal report on HMI visit to school 15th February 1990 paragraph15).

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- ✓ School identity / ethos
- ✓ School established within the largest Muslim community in Britain
- ✓ Strong support from local and wider Muslim community
- ✓ Support from other religious denominations / organizations
- ✓ School established for over ten years - amongst the first of its kind in Britain

Weaknesses:

- ❑ Poor financial / technological resources, i.e. inadequate premises according to requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1981
- ❑ Aspects of school curriculum being inadequate (HMI visit 15 / 2 / 1990)

Opportunities:

- ✓ State funding, enabling Muslim children from low income / poorer families to attend the school
- ✓ Refurbishment / renovation of premises
- ✓ Improvement & support of financial resources
- ✓ Official acknowledgement / acceptance by wider society
- ✓ Realise Mission / Vision statement

Threats:

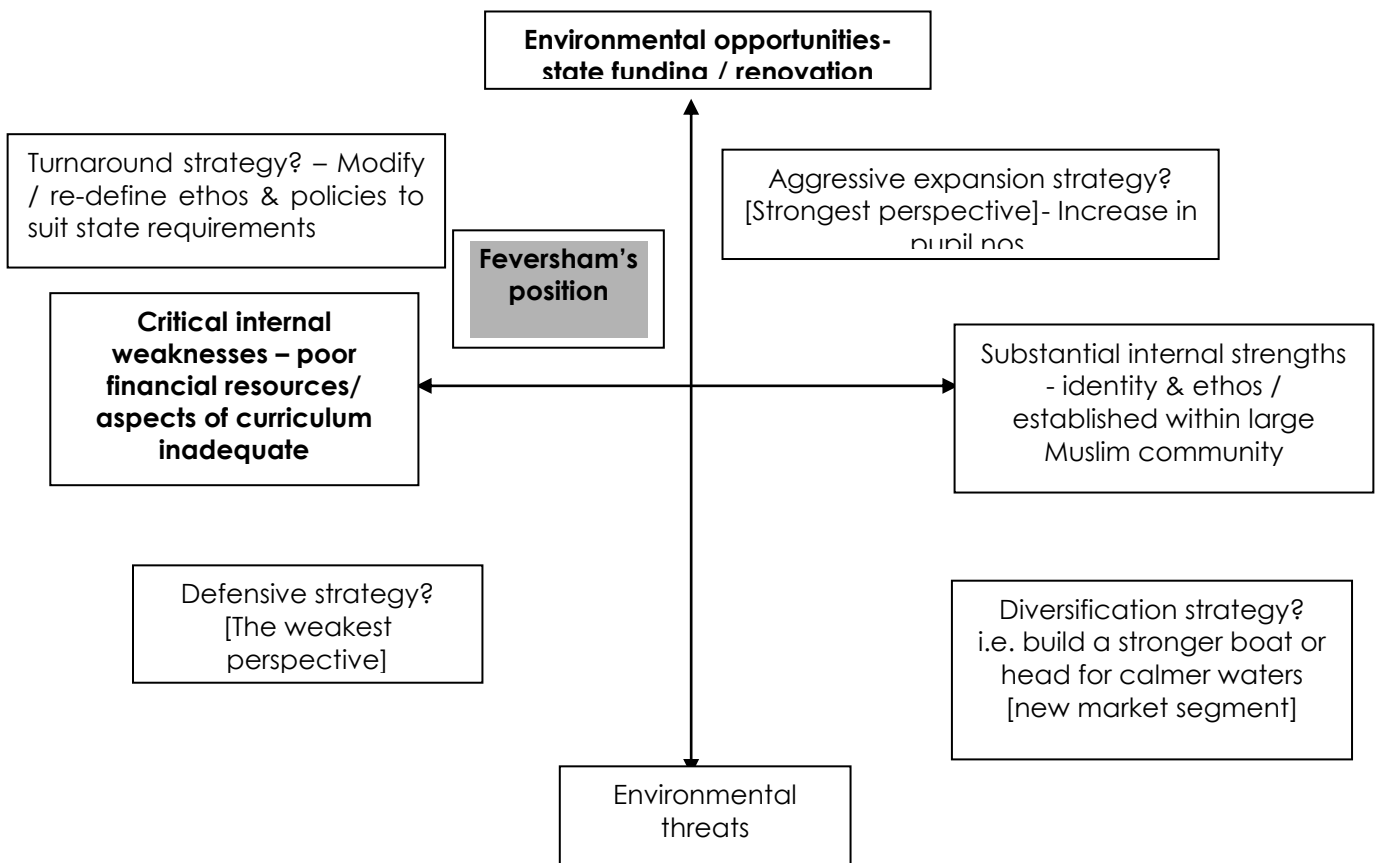
- ❑ School identity, i.e. being Muslim - political bias against Muslims as a whole
- ❑ Involvement of other religious denominations / organisations thus Multi - faith perspective, which obscures the Islamic one.
- ❑ Rejection of application
- ❑ Political bias against schools of this kind
- ❑ Closure
- ❑ Compromising essential principles of Islam to satisfy state requirements.

Stakeholder expectations

The stakeholders are, first and foremost, the parents and the children attending the school. Their expectations are clear and simple; state funding for the school, whereby its efficiency and overall function / role in society can be realised, enabling Muslim children the opportunity to benefit, indeed, excel in a more conducive environment.

Critical (competitive) forces affecting Feversham

The SWOT analysis assists in highlighting the areas that are most critical to the school and can be depicted using the 'Grand Cluster Model', (adapted from Slatter's [1996] "Corporate Recovery");



Case study 2: Islamia School

The environment

The school is situated in the north London borough of Brent. The Muslim community within the north west of London is relatively diverse in their cultural backgrounds, coming from many regions of the Muslim world. This is, to an extent, witnessed in the pupil population of the school.

Socio - Cultural

Islamia Primary school was established in October 1983. The school was opened as a result of Muslim parent's concern over the type and standard of education offered by the state schools.

Almost immediately upon opening the school, (December 1983), a letter requesting Voluntary aided status was sent to the Secretary of State. This was subsequently followed by a formal application on 25th April 1986.

Islamia's intention was clear from its inception;

"... the quest for equal treatment under the law... [to] increase parental choice within North West London and thus open up the possibility of a full - time education within an Islamic ethos for more children... within the state maintained sector... in a secure Islamic environment through the knowledge and application of the Qur'an and the Sunnah."

GM Proposal, (1997, Point 1, pps.1-2).

Student Population

In the academic year 1996 / 97 the number of students on the primary school roll, (NOR), amounted to 180. The following year witnessed an increase to 210. The NOR for other LEA maintained and GM schools in Brent over the academic year 96 / 97, and within a two mile radius of Islamia amounted to 7589.

The surplus capacity for school places in Brent in January 1996 amounted to 753.

It should be noted, at this point, that Islamia's 1986 application for Voluntary aided status was rejected on 24th May 1990, on the grounds of there being too many surplus places in schools within a two mile radius of this particular school. However, in 1993, The Education Act [1993] introduced the GM option for independent schools. Islamia then decided to apply for this.

The school has a waiting list of 954 children, attracting 26% of its pupils from over twenty five other London Boroughs, (GM proposal, [1997], Part 6, p.6).

Technological

Since its inception Islamia has continually developed and improved its technological resources to meet the requirements stipulated by law and thus place it in a strong position to receive state funding.

Economical

A Bursary system enables children, whose parents have financial constraints or other acute circumstances, to receive education at a subsidised rate. This is provided for by the School Trust. In the event of state funding being declined again, the Trustees would continue to run the school on an independent basis, however, low income parents could be forced to withdraw their children from the school as they would prove to be a financial burden on its continued function. It is a fact that the school's survival is also dependent upon school fees, as well as donations.

The schools financial position based on fee revenue is relatively strong as is reflected in previous forecasts / figures;

Fees received from 180 students in the academic year 1996 / 97 = £ 304, 731.

65 students paid the full fee 100%; £2,205 = £143, 325

50 students paid 80% of full fee; £1,764 = £ 88, 200

40 students paid 60% of full fee; £1,323 = £ 52, 920

12 students paid 50% of full fee; £1,102 = £ 13, 230

8 students paid 40% of full fee; £ 882 = £ 7,056

5 students paid 0% of full fee; 0 = Nil

(GM Proposal, [1997], Appendix 8).

The income & expenditure forecast for the year ending 31st March 1998 has, as can be expected, been based on actual figures obtained from the most recent years, (1993 - 97);

Income

Grants	£ 407,135
other income (non public)	£ <u>49,500</u>
	£ 456,635

Expenditure

Staff costs - Teaching	£ 222,052
Administration staff costs - Support staff	£ 55,714

Maintenance of premises	£ 29,500
Other occupancy costs	£ 20,000
Educational supplies & services	£ 22,500
Other supplies & services	£ 14,870
Furniture & equipment	£ <u>6,000</u>
Excess of income over expenditure	£ <u>370,636</u>
	£ 85,999

Political / Legal

Islamia has been one of the flagships amongst a sea of; “... ***fierce criticism from politicians, educationalists, journalists and members of the public who cannot bear to see Muslims taking direct control of their children’s education.***” A.A. Ahmed (1995 p2).

The circumstances generally surrounding Islamia are not dissimilar to those faced by Feversham College. (Please refer to case study one for further elucidation).

Competitive Rivalry

As with Feversham rivalry might again be viewed from the perspective of other existing state funded schools within the two mile radius of the school itself. It was as a result of surplus places existing in these schools that Islamia was initially refused Voluntary aided status.

Resources and Strategic capability

Human Resources: Islamia presently employs eleven qualified teachers and eleven administrative staff. (In view of imminent state funding further job vacancies for teachers have been created).

The administrative team is responsible for running both the primary and secondary girls schools. (GM proposal [1997] Point 16, p13 and Appendices 15 & 16).

The school provides in - service training for its staff’s educational and professional development, taking into account the DES Administrative Memorandum 1/ 83, when employing newly qualified teachers.

The school’s capabilities in respect of its staff is such that it can effectively adapt to many of the requirements / stipulations laid down by the law, so far as employment, education and technology are concerned. For example, following an OFSTED inspection in December 1995, the school was able to

strengthen its management structure, particularly in the areas of concern highlighted by the inspection, i.e. Subject and Key Stage Co - coordinators needing closer liaison and supervision by the Principal. The appointment of a deputy head teacher was a further recommendation made, in order to strengthen this aspect of leadership. (Point 16 (c), p.13 of 1997 proposal).

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- ✓ School identity / ethos
- ✓ Reputation amongst Muslim community - 1st Muslim school in London
- ✓ Famous chairman, (Yusuf Islam, formerly Cat Stevens)
- ✓ Strong financial support from donors
- ✓ Strong support from Muslim community
- ✓ Ability to subsidise pupil's fees.

Weaknesses:

- Islamic education amounts to only 12.5% of school timetable
- Islamic ethos is disparate amongst teaching staff, i.e. staff are recruited according to academic qualifications / subject specialisation. In other words the school's ethos is not fully embodied in its recruitment strategy.

Opportunities:

- ✓ State funding
- ✓ Official acknowledgement / acceptance by wider society
- ✓ Marketing opportunities for school - direct result of chairman's other outside activities / personality / popularity
- ✓ Children with straitened circumstances being able to attend the school
- ✓ Becoming a flagship for the new government

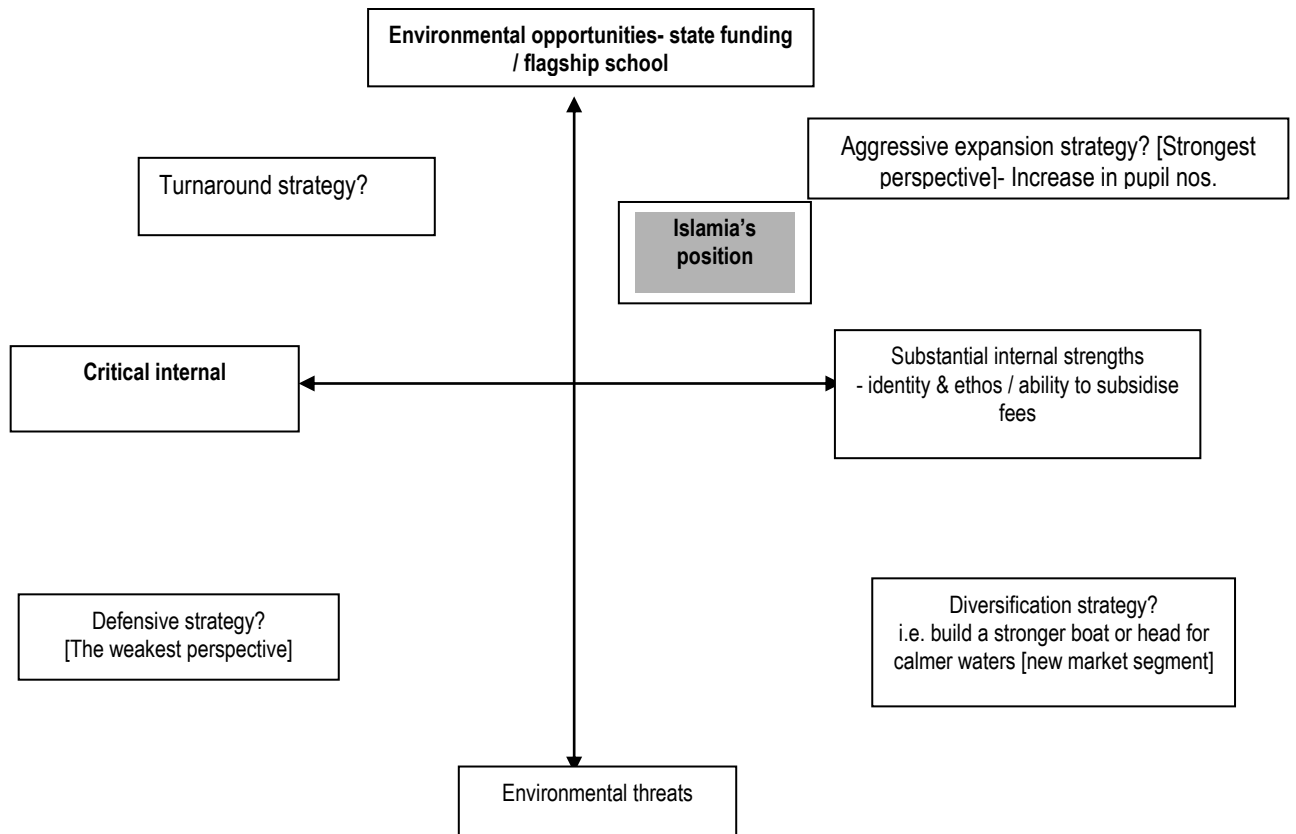
Threats:

- School identity - political bias against Muslims as a whole
- Becoming a token school for the government, having to comply and, thereafter compromise to a greater extent than originally envisaged

Stakeholders

These are similar to those highlighted in the Feversham case study.

Critical (competitive) forces affecting Islamia



Case study three: Iqra School

The environment

The school's location is in the London Borough of Lambeth, South West London. Lambeth and, more specifically Brixton continues to endure long - standing and well publicised social challenges, such as high urban unemployment, street crime and social deprivation.

The multi - cultural population of the area has evolved steadily over the last forty years, with the influx of immigrants originally coming predominantly from the West Indies and Africa.

In most recent years there has been an increased influx of asylum seekers, especially from Muslim countries like Somalia, Sudan, Algeria, the Middle East and other less populated regions like Bosnia. The increase of immigrants to Brixton has led to the inevitable growth of the Muslim community there.

Socio - Cultural

Iqra Independent Community School was established in September 1994 by parents concerned about their children's moral and academic education in mainstream schools and, the nominal attention that was being afforded to Islamic education in already established Muslim schools.

The school commenced with only seven children on its register and has since expanded to accommodate over ninety pupils. (This includes girls, boys and nursery age children).

The demands on the school are continuing to increase since the wide range of damning reports from OFSTED on schools within Lambeth, (V. Chung [1996],p 5). In addition to this, parents who have been dissatisfied with other Muslim school's ability to deliver a balanced curriculum with Islam as its theme have opted for Iqra's style of teaching and emphasis on religion. Pupils now attend Iqra from boroughs across London, with some of their parents actually relocating close to the school and the adjoining community centre.

Enquiries about the school from non - Muslim parents, interested in the moral aspects of Islamic teachings, are also on the increase. The latter reflects the renewed or heightened interest in what Islam has to offer to the society as a whole, considering the demise in the social, educational and religious domains of society.

Unfortunately, Iqra has not been in a position to meet some the demands of the community or, for that matter, the pupils. This is primarily because of the lack of resources. The fact that most of the pupils attending the school come from families receiving state benefit, means it is imprudent to even consider raising school fees, thus enabling Iqra to alleviate some of its financial difficulties and cater for pupils in some vital areas more adequately.

The socio - cultural climate surrounding Iqra clearly highlights the importance of the school's existence, indeed survival in an area that is, unfortunately one of failing standards so far as education, employment and religion are concerned. In addition to this, ***“... Iqra must also consider the areas where it may experience reverse social influences in comparison to local, national or global trends. For example, the millennium - driven trends based on innovation are only of external relevance to the school whose internal policies and practices are based on a resurgence of age - old doctrines and traditions.”***

V.Chung [1997, p6]

Technological

Technology has had an inevitable impact on the school's policies, procedures and objectives so far as IT is concerned. However, due caution has been exercised in regard to the over emphasis of such technology which so often results in the impairment of a child's learning process of basic fundamental skills, like spelling maths, etc. The intention of the school's policies developed around technology is to maintain a balanced perspective on both technological inertia and over dependency on IT.

The school endeavours, therefore to develop in both pupils and staff reasonable competence and a discerning proficiency to use the technology available. The benefits derived from teaching staff in this regard are immense. Use of multi - media resources and desktop publishing has enabled the school to trim its costs on text books and other costly resources by producing in - house teaching and training material.

Poor financial resources have meant that the school is unable to keep abreast of the continuing advances in the IT industry, resulting in the present equipment becoming quickly outdated.

Economical

School fees are charged at a rate of £1000 per annum. Consideration is given to those families sending more than one child to the school or where the parents are themselves teachers. Thereafter, concessions are made according to those financial circumstances. As can be expected, it is rare that all parents can actually afford these fees. In fact, the average fee per child collected each month from the boys section of the school, in the first seven months of its inception, (September 1996 - March 1997), amounted to £34.81.

The NOR between this period totaled twenty eight. Unfortunately, as the term progressed, not one single parent was able to continue paying the full fee every month contrary to the commitment given and, indeed, the contracts signed. Clearly, in the light of such developments the school became uneconomical to run, however the dependency of the parents and pupils on the boys section of the

school had increased to such an extent that the community centre in which it was housed, (Brixton Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre), contributed to all running costs and salaries.

The total fees collected between the aforementioned period in the boys section amounted to £ 6823, with a donation of £1000, making the final figure £ 7823.

Taking into account the minimal salaries paid (£ 6176.40), stationary and furniture costs, (£ 667.09) and educational resources, i.e. textbooks etc. (£1063.95), totaling £7908.25, the boys section was functioning at a slight deficit of £85.25.

The more established girls section of the school functioned on a similar basis. However, in order to sustain its functioning the school had to rely largely upon the good will and commitment of the staff.

Salaries were paid at the rate of £15 a day, with the majority of the staff being employed on a part time basis. The most a part time teacher could work in any given month would amount to only ten hours due to financial constraints.

In the academic year 1996 / 1997 staff in both sections of the school numbered twenty two, nineteen of them belonging to the girl's school section. Five of these teachers were qualified, with the remainder possessing a range of post graduate and professional child care qualifications.

The NOR for the girls school, primary and secondary, amounted to fifty five.

In this section of the school the annual fees for the year came to £18,788.44, which meant that each child was paying an average of £341.60 a year. When examining these figures more closely, the average fee collected each month per child amounted to no more than £28.46, less than the boys section.

It was clear that the income over expenditure meant that the school was continually operating at a loss. Whilst it was non - profit making, great concern arose due to the sheer size of the deficit. Generous donations from those in support of the school only assisted temporarily and could not be relied upon too heavily.

The inevitable had to occur; closure of one of the more costly aspects of the school and a trimming down of staff. The end of the academic year ending June 1997, witnessed the closure of the secondary school for girls, with a reduced pupil number of thirty eight. Staff in that section was further reduced by almost half, to just ten.

Interest from a few Muslim educational trusts has led to a series of managerial reviews in connection with the entire development and funding of the school. It has become clear to many of the Muslim community in Britain that Brixton, as a location, is a fertile environment in which to firmly establish an

Islamic school, both because of the poor standard of education witnessed within the borough and, because of the growing Muslim population.

The financial plan for 1998 - 99 was recently presented to two Inspectors attending the school, (19th May 1998). The plan proposed a complete re - structuring of the boys and girls school, taking into consideration all resourcing difficulties, human and financial, experienced to date.

A comprehensive budget, reflecting realistic salaries and operational costs, was given. This amounted to £652,060 for both schools.

Iqra School continues to operate under its parent organisation's charitable status and, thus far remains a non - profit making organisation.

Political / Legal

Politically, Iqra faces similar circumstances to those of the other schools examined previously.

However, there is a stronger focus on this school and the community to which it is attached, due to the orthodoxy of its Islamic practice. In addition to this, the increasing number of Muslim refugees frequenting the Islamic centre attached to the school, has raised the entire profile of the Muslim community in Brixton.

Both the boys and girls school sections recently received temporary registration, (May and August 1998 respectively).

Competitive Rivalry

The only rivalry apparent is that of the three existing Muslim schools in South West London. Iqra was deemed a threat to the two other schools, which are situated in different boroughs, three and five miles respectively from Brixton, due to it being a new educational institution. Marketing efforts of Iqra's rivals have increased to the degree that they have canvassed old pupils of their schools who now attend Iqra. There is an absence of rivalry from other state or denominational schools in Lambeth. It is suspected that this is due to the crisis many of them are facing within their own establishments in respect of the poor standards of education, already widely reported by OFSTED.

Resources and Strategic Capability

Physical Resources: Having recently acquired the parent organisation's premises, the boys section of Iqra is now operating in a more secure environment. Extensive renovations are imminent, which shall include proper class room facilities and a library.

Human Resources: In line with the proposals made in the new financial Budget, there are plans to provide in house training for those staff who do not possess relevant teaching skills or qualifications.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- ✓ Strong spiritual ethos and internal routines
- ✓ Centralised control
- ✓ Minimal running and capital costs
- ✓ Focus on quality learning and discipline; small class sizes
- ✓ Extensive Research and development activity outputs
- ✓ Actively evolving policy standards
- ✓ Bilingual curriculum
- ✓ Apolitical; no socio - cultural emphasis
- ✓ In - house desktop publishing
- ✓ Fully subscribed classes
- ✓ Highly differentiated academically and spiritually
- ✓ Contract culture - (emphasis being on commitment; formalising matters despite being a community / 'voluntary' project.)

Weaknesses:

- Limited resources, i.e. financial, technological
- Limited IT facilities and skills
- Limited market research
- Uncatalogued Research and Development material, therefore some duplication of efforts
- Upper Key Stage 2 and 3 curriculum and teaching standards
- Slow / unreliable communication channels
- Financial planning does not include any ratios for gearing, liquidity, growth or productivity
- No firm structure / procedure for school fee discounts
- Limited Science and sports facilities

Opportunities:

- ✓ Renewed / increasing interest in Islam and Islamic schools

- ✓ Regular sponsors
- ✓ Section 11 funding from the LEA - (Ethnic minority community education)
- ✓ Supportive 'voice' of the community mosque
- ✓ Long term funding
- ✓ IT and access to the World Wide Web
- ✓ Increasing policy developments in mainstream education.
- ✓ Registration (HMI)

Threats:

- ❑ Eventual closure of entire school
- ❑ Adverse media from rivals, pseudo - Islamic movements with political / racist associations
- ❑ Wider community challenges, i.e. crime, unemployment and Social Welfare
- ❑ Clients' low income
- ❑ Increasing power of core clientele due to sibling membership
- ❑ Becoming stuck at the Dar ul Uloom point of the continuum, due to excessive influence of the community mosque.

Culture and Stakeholder expectations

“Iqra School is built around certain key cultural values, beliefs and assumptions which combine to mould the school’s unique internal paradigm. This can be represented by means of a ‘cultural web’ of key symbolic, political and structural aspects of the school’s existence:

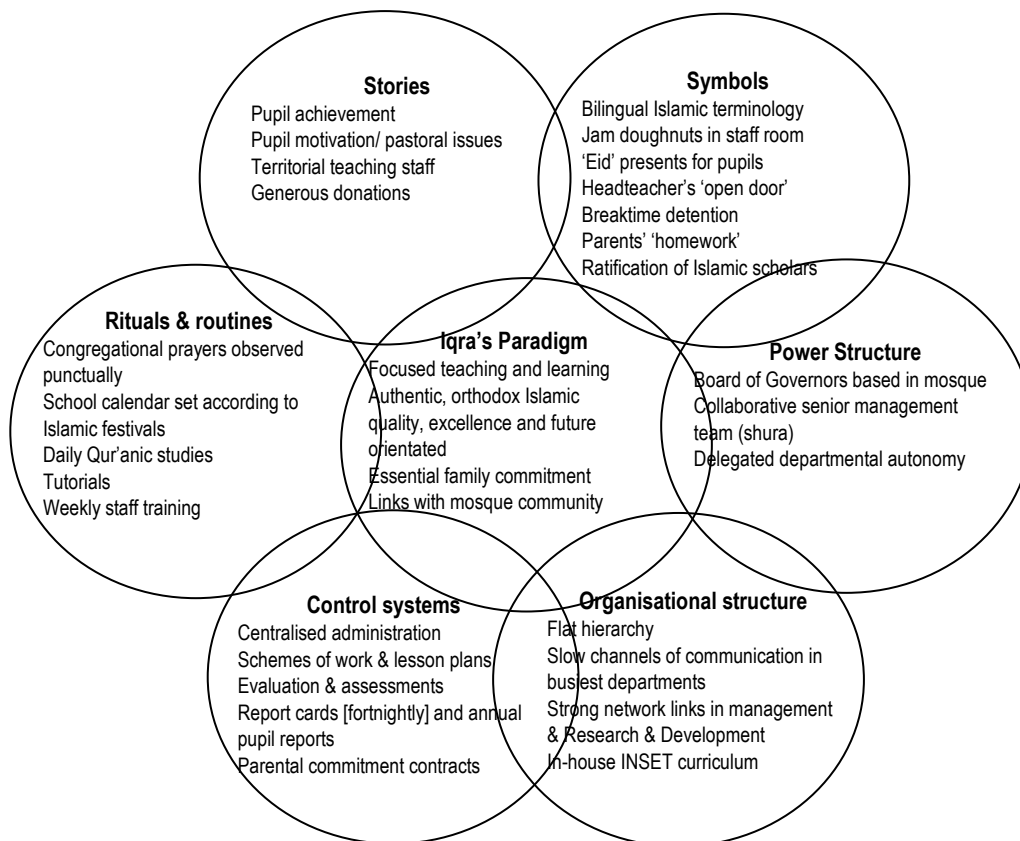
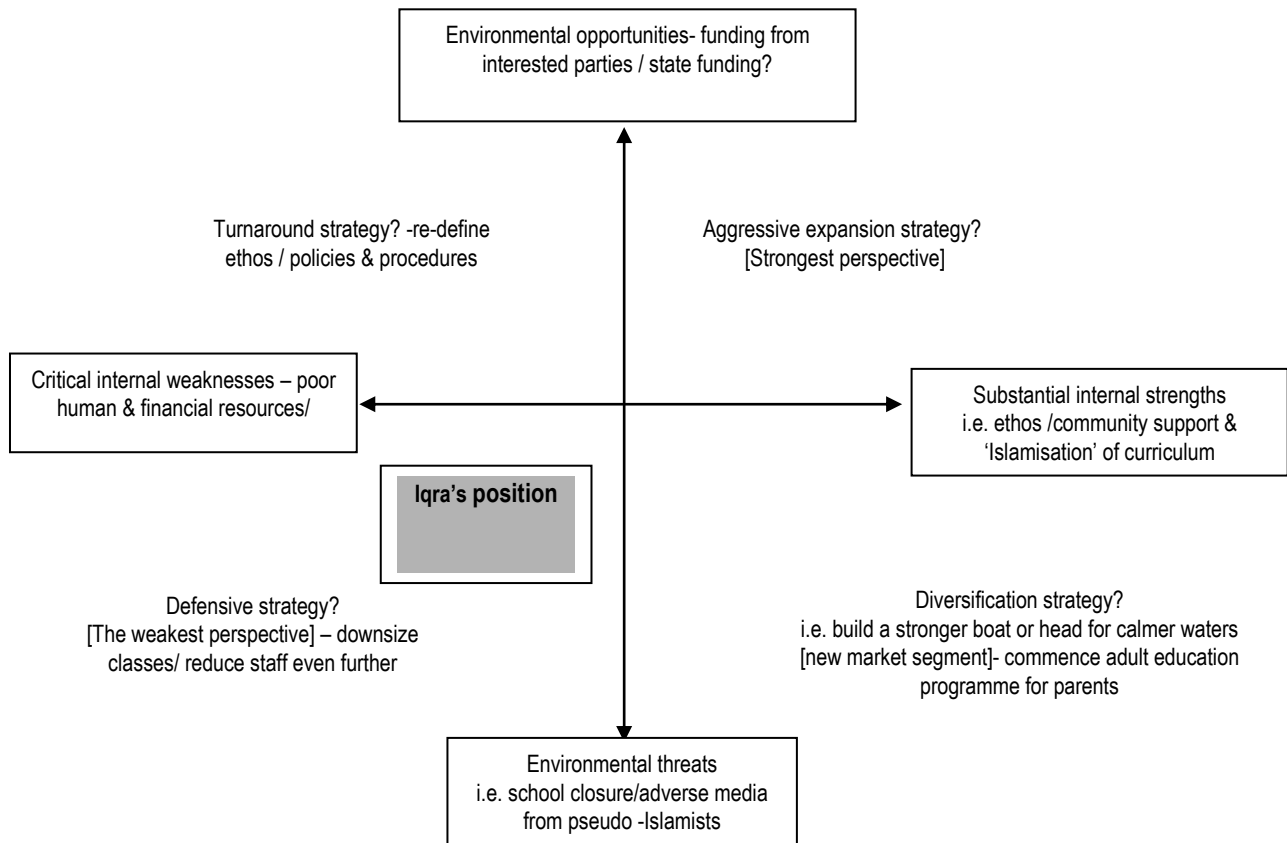


Figure 8: The cultural web of Iqra School
[Source: Author adapted from model in Johnson & Scholes 1993:61]
V. Chung [1997, p.16]

Critical (competitive) forces affecting Iqra



The Curriculum

Before concluding this chapter it is necessary to briefly consider each of the school's approach to the National Curriculum and the extent to which Islam actually shapes or, permeates the same.

Faversham College has defined a broad curriculum, taking into consideration the entire National Curriculum. It has, at the same time, endeavoured to provide the students with “... *the opportunity to understand how best to live as British Muslims in a predominantly non - Muslim multicultural society.*” (VAS application [1994, Part 1,p.6]).

Faversham's application refers to a dynamic approach to the curriculum, whilst acknowledging the Islamic heritage of the students. Unfortunately, such terms, or for that matter, the application does not actually shed much light as to how much the school's Islamic ethos is to shape the curriculum.

Perhaps the most significant observation to be made in this regard is the fact that, despite the school ethos objectives; “*It is a matter of factual record that 70% of the present teaching staff... are non - Muslims.*” (VAS application [1994, Part 1, p.16]).

This invariably defeats the objective of parents sending their children to Muslim schools and, furthermore appears to contradict Feversham's vision statement.

Islamia School has clearly allotted 12.5% of the school timetable to Islamic education. This comprises memorisation of the Qur'an, recital and understanding of the same, manners and etiquettes, Islamic jurisprudence and studying the life of Prophet Muhammad, (Peace and Blessings be upon him). The remaining 87.5% of the school timetable is devoted to the compulsory subjects, in accordance with the National Curriculum. (Appendix 17 of GM Proposal [1997], p.1).

Again, in view of the ethos and overall objective of the school, the time allocated for Islamic instruction / education, appears minimal.

Iqra School has, from its inception, sought to remedy the apparent lack of religious influence throughout the schools. Islamic studies, thus stands as the bedrock of the school's curriculum and the principle subject of study. Curriculum content is designed to provide pupils with the necessary skills and competence to develop mastery of Islamic disciplines. Almost every subject, therefore, has Islam as its foundation of study.

Islamic education is not, therefore restricted to one or two lessons of Islamic studies each week. Instead, it forms the basis for most subjects enabling the religion to permeate every aspect of the pupils' school life. It is no surprise, therefore that Islamic education accounts for more than 50% of the school's timetable.

This Islamic dimension accords with Dr Marie Parker - Jenkins' observation that;

“Set within the National Curriculum Guidelines, there is potential scope for inclusion of non - Western perspectives within the options of subjects such as history and geography.”

(1995,p72).

Iqra has gone one step further in incorporating Islam into the National Curriculum as much as possible, discarding aspects of the latter that are not conducive to Islamic principles, i.e. the *nature and content of teaching* Sex Education in schools, also Music, Art involving animate objects, e.g. Portraiture.

Interviews

Eight teachers were interviewed, five working at the schools which are the subject of this study. The remaining three were Muslim teachers who have worked in both Muslim and state schools. Interviews conducted with the five 'case study' teachers were on following basis;

- a) to determine their views regarding a move, by their respective schools, towards state funding and the possible causes / resultant effects of such a progression;
- b) to, thereafter triangulate these findings with those of the case studies which have preceded.

The intention behind interviewing the three teachers not belonging to the case study schools, was to examine whether any similarities existed between their perception on state funding for Muslim schools and the five actually working in the schools that were faced with this somewhat pressing issue. In addition to this, information could be obtained as to whether the portrayal of largely Muslim populated state schools was indeed accurate, i.e. that, on the whole, they are inadequate for Muslim children and are failing to sufficiently cater for their religious / moral needs.

Chapter Five - Research findings & results

Case Studies

Each case study highlighted shreds of common variables, such as the primary objectives for establishing the schools, i.e. providing a secure Islamic environment for Muslim children. However, the point of divergence occurs when each school begins to conceptualise the degree to which Islam should influence the functioning of the school, e.g. should only the Islamic customs, (prayer, religious festivals, hijab etc.) be the focus, or the entire school curriculum be subjected to Islamic principles / governance. Research of a similar kind, conducted by Dr Marie Parker - Jenkins (1995, pps.83 - 87), into the needs of Muslim pupils, highlighted the same area of divergence where the respondents interviewed differed; ***“... over the conceptualisation of religion in the lives of Muslim children.”***

When observing Feversham and Islamia, it appears that both school's conceptualisation of Islam related, first and foremost, to the ***identity*** of the students. Evidence of this can be seen from the very general ethos / vision of the schools in which the main objective is to provide education *'within a secure Islamic environment.'* This *'environment'* is one where pupils are not exposed to alien / foreign religious doctrines that oppose Islam. It is also an environment where the pupil can feel comfortable ***being*** Muslim - being able to wear the Hijab, pray the congregational prayer, eat Halal meals and participate unashamedly in religious / cultural activities.

Whilst these are all important facets of the religion, they focus, to an extent, on ***identity***, which is not dissimilar to some multi - cultural state schools. In comparison to academic development little emphasis appears to be given to actually ***cultivating*** the children in respect of the 'teaching curriculum', providing an environment where Islam permeates much more than just the physical / moral aspects of their lives. In fact, Islamia School holds it sufficient for Islamic studies to accommodate only 12.5% of its curriculum, leaving the remaining 87.5% for the core, academic / secular subjects. Nothing is mentioned about how these core subjects are to be adapted to incorporate an Islamic theme.

Feversham resembles Islamia in this respect, stating its very general objective to; ***“... provide the full range of the National Curriculum...”*** (VAS application [1994] Part 2, p.15).

By many Muslim parents' standards, the actual teaching time allocated to Islam in these schools would be considered minimal.

To support this observation, when Islamic Education inspectors visited Iqra school in May 1998, they remarked on how other Muslim schools had confined Islamic studies to one or two lessons each week, whereas Iqra had clearly conceptualised Islamic studies as forming the basis of almost every subject.

Iqra appears to have been aware of the vacuum created by other Muslim schools in this regard, hence the strong emphasis on, or the more apt terminology, the **'Islamisation'** of the school curriculum. Such Islamisation could also be easily transferred to the identity of the pupils, this being developed within the policy of the school. In Iqra's case, therefore, emphasis on identity was unnecessary.

Whilst saying this, Feversham's and Islamia's emphasis on identity should not be discarded, as their reasons for focusing on this becomes clear when observing the objectives and development of each school.

Feversham's ethos had to remain general, incorporating Islamic principles, such as wearing Hijab etc., which were already issues / areas of concern and at the forefront of the Muslim community's requests regarding education. It enabled the school to modify its position according to the political and environmental circumstances surrounding it, without being frowned upon by its own community, being labeled 'sell outs' on the one hand or, opportunists on the other, by the wider non Muslim society. The school was therefore, able to enlist strong support from the wider community;

"I write to confirm the Bradford Conservative Group's support for the school's application for voluntary aided status. There is an undoubted demand within the Bradford area for this facility."
(Bradford Council Conservative Group [1994]).

"I am only too willing to accede to your request for.... support to your application for Voluntary Aided status. The Muslim Girls' school.... is certainly not narrowly exclusive, and does not tend to reinforce the divisions in our society - quite the reverse." (Leeds Diocesan Commission for Christian Unity [1994]).

Islamia's objectives, from the outset, pitched the school against the state educational establishment, challenging it over a sustained period to either provide funding or, give reasonable justification for refusing it. The school ensured that it was placed in a firm position, economically, religiously and technologically, to mount this sort of challenge. In doing so however, Islamia could not risk damaging its bid for funding by also emphasising too strongly the Islamisation process of the National Curriculum. This could have, at such an early stage of the school's application, increased existing fears about the so called 'hidden agenda' behind Muslim schools.

Iqra differs from Feversham and Islamia in that it has never developed along the lines of applying for state funding. The effects of state legislation on the school have, so far, been minimal. Having said this, the school recently underwent the first of a series of inspections from the DFEE in order to become

registered. Both sections of the school, (boys and girls) have been provisionally registered pending further inspections, (DFEE letters to the school dated 10th and 17th August 1998).

With such imminent inspections Iqra can no longer ignore basic state requirements even if it wishes to continue operating on an independent basis.

The initial observations made by the DFEE proved beneficial in that Iqra was able to gauge the acceptability of its curriculum. Some of the observations made were that; **“Teaching staff are adequately qualified...”** and that; **“The instruction is suitable and efficient, bearing in mind the age and ability of the pupils...”** (DFEE letter to Iqra school [17 / 8 / 98]).

Suggestions were made on how to *“broaden and deepen the secular curriculum”* in subjects such as General Studies, which could deal with historical and geographical matters.

In light of these observations, the school can continue to Islamise its curriculum, incorporating an innovative approach to core subjects, as outlined in the Dearing Report [1994]. It can also begin to implement the advice and considerations of the DFEE, without too much compromise.

Iqra is similar to Feversham in respect of resourcing difficulties. Both schools have severe financial and technological constraints. This is another factor which precipitated Feversham’s application for funding, (the other being the pressure from the local Muslim community). The main source of income for both schools is from school fees which, in any event, are either often not forthcoming or, subsidised due to the poor economic position of the parents.

Iqra’s situation is acute, to the extent that if a solution is not found in the short term, the school faces closure.

Critical forces affecting the schools - analysis

From the preceding analysis it is acceptable to deduce that the three schools are placed in the appropriate positions. (Refer to pages 31, 36 and 43).

Islamia possesses enough internal strength, by way of its objectives and resources, to seize upon the environmental opportunities. One of the important and key factors behind the schools strength and subsequent success in receiving funding was its ability to **sustain** the application for state funding over a long period, due to the presence and support of wealthy donors/ sponsors.

Feversham, on the other hand, whilst facing the same environmental opportunities as Islamia, has been forced to approach them from a different perspective, primarily due to its internal weaknesses, namely the lack of financial resources. This in itself perpetuates all other resourcing difficulties, from staff to equipment.

In order for this school to seize the opportunities it is faced with significant changes are required. Amongst them is re - defining the schools curriculum, developing or, adopting policies conducive to the requirements of the state. Although this is stated as an objective the DFEE, in their inspection of the school on 15th December 1990, gave emphatic suggestions for the changes needed regarding the school curriculum. Since the school's last application for funding (1994), it is expected that this key issue has been suitably addressed.

The critical forces affecting Iqra highlight the dilemma that, although the school prides itself on its internal strengths, which are in essence fundamental, these are not enough to sustain either an expansion towards any existing or perceived environmental opportunities, let alone develop strategies for diversification, thereby avoiding / minimising environmental threats.

Specific attention must be given to the internal weaknesses due to their severity and the impending effects if they are not tackled in the short term. Defensive strategies are therefore, the only option available for the school, until a firm decision is made on how the school is going to alleviate its difficulties on a long term basis.

Interview Analysis

The interviews proved to be an effective method of comparing the data obtained from the case studies. They provided a more up to date account of circumstances and events surrounding each school, especially since the granting of state funds to two Muslim schools this year (1998).

When asked how each case study school differed from other state schools where Muslim pupils formed the majority, all five respondents, (1 - Feversham, 2 - Islamia and 2 - Iqra), remarked on **fundamental** differences. Reference was made to the Islamic atmosphere prevalent in their schools alongside a “... **broadened timetable.... beyond the National Curriculum.**” This ‘broadening’ was in respect of the additional subjects which clearly outline the Islamic personality, i.e. Arabic, Islamic studies and Arabic language.

Each respondent mentioned their school’s ability to provide time for most of the daily prayers, without hindering the children and staff.

Two of the three teachers from the other state schools acceded that, although their schools made some provisions for the Muslim pupils, such as prayer, Halal meals etc. the actual atmosphere and environment was not conducive to the pupil’s religious and moral development. One of them remarked that; “**All schools acknowledge cultural diversity; however problems occur when they try to introduce a multi - cultural curriculum.**”

Each case study school thus enabled the pupils to develop religiously within the ambit of an Islamic environment. They were, as one principal observed, able to; “... **practice their Islam... as well as getting education they would otherwise get in a state school.**”

Another observation made by a teacher attending one of the case study schools was that; “... **not only have we taken care of their Islamic personality, but also fed them the knowledge that they need to progress in this society.**”

The five respondents attending the schools studied were unanimous in voicing their optimism about the effects of state funding on their respective institutions. Such optimism was tempered with caution by two of the teachers from Iqra. They believed that state funding would have to be on their schools’ terms, with minimal interference from the state / LEA.

The two respondents from Islamia viewed state funding as a positive step so far as the parents were concerned. Funding would alleviate the financial burden on the parents and provide an opportunity for those, who could not previously afford the fees, to send their children to the school. The long standing parents / clientele deserved this opportunity as, after all, they had “sacrificed” many years paying fees; “... **where others in the same neighbourhood received free education.**”

An interesting observation was made by one respondent from Islamia regarding state funding; “... **Muslim schools now have a say in the education system of this country, which they didn’t have in the past.**”

Unsurprisingly, the other three teachers who were teaching in state schools felt it a natural course of justice that Muslim schools receive funding.

All respondents confirmed the obvious benefits of state funding, such as adequate human and financial resources. Each school would then be in a position to deliver the school curriculum more effectively.

One respondent, again from Islamia, noted the added difficulties funding could bring in the way of bureaucracy and local competition with other funded schools. This, he described, could occur when submitting applications to the LEA for projects amidst, for example, another ninety schools in the same borough doing exactly the same. This, he acknowledged, would make each application more difficult to be approved.

When asked about the key factors would affect / are affecting each school’s decision to apply to apply for funding, the respondents provided a wide range of answers.

For the Head teacher of Feversham parental choice was a major reason for proceeding towards state funding, so that; ***“... they can send their children to a Muslim school, if they wish to do so. There are Christian schools, Jewish schools....”***

Three of the teachers from the schools in question considered it the Muslim community's right, so far as paying taxes were concerned. The two teachers from Islamia believed this to be a strong enough factor to challenge the government over the right to receive funding for Muslim children, hence the schools' unyielding stance and campaigning over the last ten or so years. One of the teachers from Iqra shared this particular view also. However, the main underlying cause and indeed, common variable between the schools that had caused / would precipitate a move towards funding was the constraint upon resources.

Despite the moral religious issues surrounding the whole climate over the principles of funding all of the five respondents affirmed that their schools were facing a shortage of funds. This was enough to consider, what has been deemed, the only positive and realistic alternative to alleviating each schools' present, short and long term problems.

Upon being asked whether funding would affect each school's policies, ethos and religious direction, one respondent was emphatic in stating;

“...the funding granted to this school was on the basis that the secular state had approved funding for a Muslim school. Its very clear in the application... therefore, funding should be on that basis.”

The Principal at Iqra was resigned to the inevitability of having to compromise the content of some foundation curriculum subjects such as History, but felt that the overall effect on school policy etc. would be minimal. He stressed that, so long as the school management and teachers were at the helm of major developments, any drastic or controversial changes could be minimised.

The other respondent from Iqra did not share this view. Whilst he considered funding as something that could be positive, there was the decisive factor of “outside control” on the curriculum which would impede the school in some respect, i.e. the necessity of teaching the theory of evolution, which opposes Islamic belief.

Other difficulties anticipated in the event of receiving funding would, again be in respect of the curriculum, i.e. Music and P.E. In Feversham's case, despite the Head teachers firm stance against compromising in these areas the final decision would be that of the Board of Governors.

The respondents confirmed the amount of time allocated to both secular and Islamic subjects in the curriculum. Feversham and Islamia both apportion their curriculums on a 87.5% - 12.5% basis, the larger apportionment being towards academic subjects. Supplementary time was given for assemblies and prayer in both schools.

The respondents for Iqra could not quantify the exact apportionment as they were still in the process of developing / Islamising their curriculum. However, suffice it to say that over 50% of their curriculum is allocated to Islamic studies, including the Islamisation of most academic subjects.

Only the respondents from Islamia were able to provide a more detailed response to the question about any immediate changes that would have to be made to the school structure. This was due to the fact that they had just received funding and were more aware of state requirements in this regard. The respondents from the two other schools were unclear due to the simple fact that they had not proceeded as far along this particular path as Islamia.

The changes were, primarily to Islamia's managerial structure. For example, an *official* board of governors had to be set up in accordance with state guidelines. The Head teacher adopted more hands on management with personnel and operational matters. This had, up until recently, been left up to the manager of the trust office, whose position had now become obsolete.

The final supplementary question dealt with the five respondents from the case study schools perception of their schools - did they consider them '*Islamic*' or '*Muslim*', (according to the definitions provided earlier in this study).

All respondents felt that their respective schools were closer to the ideal of the 'Islamic' school. It was, however, interesting to note one respondent from Islamia School saying;

"... If I compare Islamia School to other schools Islamia is far ahead in every respect... I would also say we have to go a long way where Tarbiyyah (Islamic cultivation) for our children is concerned. For that you need committed Muslim teachers who have a thorough knowledge of Islam. So even if they are teaching Chemistry or Physics, from there they can also convey the message of Islam, what Islam says about a particular topic..."

In effect he felt that the ideal school, which would have an Islamised curriculum, could not exist until Muslim teachers were themselves suitably qualified in both academic subjects and Islam as a religion.

Triangulation of data

Triangulation of data was achieved in that there was a large degree of corresponding data between the two sources, i.e. documentary and interview. Alternatively, the findings also highlighted a few significant discrepancies between the two.

Feversham: The case study and interview data corresponds so far as the resource difficulties faced by the school are concerned. This has been a continuing difficulty, forcing the school to continue its attempts for state funding.

Interview data confirmed the deductions made from the documentary evidence, namely that the school offered general objectives so far as the curriculum was concerned. The proportion of academic subjects to Islamic ones remained the same, i.e. 87.5% to 12.5% respectively.

Discrepancies between the sources of data were witnessed in respect to the ratio of Muslim teachers against non - Muslim ones. The 1994 application highlighted that 70% of the teachers were in fact non - Muslim, with the remaining 30% being Muslim. However, by 1998 this bias had been completely reversed.

Such a discrepancy is understandable, considering the time that has elapsed since submitting the application and a change in strategy in light of Islamia's success in obtaining state funding.

Islamia: Most of the data corresponds in that the initial objectives for the schools' establishment appear consistent. Discrepancies appear, to an extent, surprisingly in the same area. where the respondents allude to the 'rights' of the schools and parents, in line with the case study, they also refer to the shortage of funds for the school. This is not actually reflected in the case study, which in fact presents the opposite impression.

In attempting to reconcile this difference, the only apparent explanation is that the 'shortage of funds' relates, by and large to difficulties in generating maintaining school fees coming from the parents.

Iqra: On the whole, the data appears to correspond so far as the endeavours to Islamise the school curriculum. The financial difficulties referred to in both sources were consistent.

The only perceived discrepancy would be in respect of the position of the school on the 'Critical Forces' chart (p43). The case study analysis placed the school between the internal weaknesses and environmental threats axis. When considering the data obtained from the interviews and, especially the optimism shown by the respondents in respect of state funding, Iqra could perhaps progress to a position similar to that of Feversham's, i.e. changing / adopting new strategies, thereby placing the school in a better position to seize upon the present environmental opportunities.

With the exception of Islamia, the data obtained has highlighted the dilemma facing some Muslim schools in respect of resources. These findings run parallel to the more extensive research effected by Dr Marie Parker - Jenkins, where she determined that 83% of Muslim schools identified better resources as being a need. In stark contrast not one state funded school referred to this as an immediate requirement. [1995, p90].

Conclusion

The viability of having separate Muslim schools in this society has long been established. This study has, thus endeavoured to determine the effects, if any, on such schools in the event of then becoming more main stream as a result of receiving state funding.

This year (1998) witnessed the significant success of two Muslim schools being granted state funds. It is, however too early to determine the full effect of such funding. Whilst saying this, the study has attempted to gain an insight from one of these successful schools, as to the extent of changes necessary to incorporate the state's requirements.

It has proved very beneficial examining three Muslim schools, each at different stages of development. This has enabled me to determine whether common variables exist between the schools so far as their ethos, political and socio - economic environment are concerned, indicating whether the schools have chosen or, were compelled, due to prevailing circumstances, to make the strategic decisions they have made or, are making.

Research findings highlighted the fact that no fundamental changes had to be made to Islamia's overall function and structure. It is indeed, a 'model school' for some of the Muslim and wider community. Financially this school proved to be the strongest of the three schools studied, monetary support coming from affluent donors / sponsors keen to see the school succeed in its bid for 'equality in education'.

Islamia's positioning along the continuum, referred to throughout this study, would be between that of the ideal '*Islamic*' school and the '*School for Muslims*', being closer to the latter end.

Feversham appears to be following Islamia in its approach concerning funding. The 1994 application is being updated, with the management of the school keeping a close eye on Islamia's formula for success. It must be said here that Feversham does not possess the financial might of Islamia, however, it has strongly relied on the unwavering support of the larger non - Muslim community of Bradford, something Islamia did not find necessary.

Whereas Islamia cited the rights of Muslims to be educated equally in the U.K, alongside what could be considered minimal financial constraints, Feversham referred to parental choice, besides their obvious resourcing difficulties, as the other main reason for seeking state funding. One could argue that both Islamia's and Feversham's reasons are one in the same, however on closer examination the latter's cause was more of a **local**, not national plight for Muslims as was the case with Islamia. Islamia was

making a statement to the establishment, whilst Feversham was merely trying to provide a more amenable facility for Muslim pupils in Bradford.

The potential areas of conflict for Feversham can be seen in the foundation subjects, such as music and P.E. The Head teacher clearly does not want to see the Islamic ethos compromised here.

However, staunch resistance in these areas may precipitate another failed application for funding. The school's situation, in this respect, is different to Islamia's due to the fact that the former is a secondary school, where more strict guidelines apply in the delivery of core and foundation subjects and, Islamia's funding was only in respect of its primary school.

In view of the school enlisting support from the wider community, and this thereby adding strength to their application, it could be placed between the 'School for Muslims' and 'Secular / academic end of the spectrum.

Iqra is attempting to provide a completely Islamised curriculum, challenging the accepted norm / ratio of academic subjects being taught against Islamic ones in Muslim schools. The school is community based and, therefore, necessarily influenced by its parent organisation, (Brixton Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre).

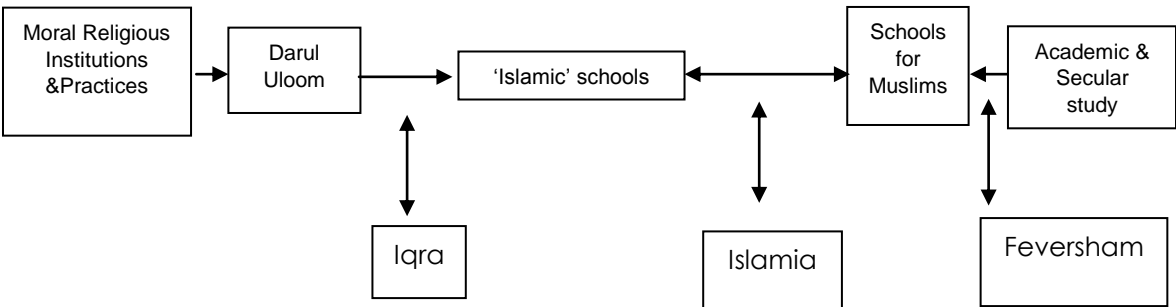
Since inception the school has continually struggled to keep pace with its resource requirements. On occasions this has caused significant problems;

“Some schools have opened with very little capital leading, in some cases, to a very high staff turnover because of low wages and scant teaching resources. This undermines parental confidence in the school and this naturally passes on to the pupils who are thus less motivated to do well.” A. A. Ahmed (1995, p.12)

The effects described here were witnessed, especially at the end of the last academic year, 1997 - 98.

In the light of the research conducted and, the subsequent findings, it seems inevitable that Iqra should soon apply for state funding. This would ensure better chances of survival, albeit amidst some challenging compromises. In the event of proceeding along this path, the school could then present a framework for an Islamised curriculum, 'testing the waters' as it were. Up until now this does not appear to have been done, leaving scope for Iqra to pilot such a curriculum in the state sector of education. Iqra would find its positioning between the '*Dar ul Uloom*' and ideal '*Islamic*' school end of the continuum. The last five years has witnessed the school moving steadily across the continuum, from the '*Moral Religious Institutions*' at its inception, (and possibly past the centre,) towards the '*School for*

Muslims' end, depending on whether state funding is realised as being the only viable alternative for survival.



Continuum highlighting each school's present position

Finally, it can perhaps be deduced that a Muslim school with a more **Islamic** ethos, which permeates the **entire** school structure, is hegemonically influenced by the religion of Islam itself. On the other hand, the school which focuses more on Muslim **identity** appears to be intrinsically influenced by the dictates of the society in which it exists.

In this society therefore, the likelihood of there existing a state funded **Islamic** school still seems remote as, it would appear that such a school could be a contradiction in terms. This would simply be due to the independence / lack of outside interference of the school on one hand and, on the other, a state system which requires that certain statutory conditions be in place before funding is even permitted. Having said this, studies in this area are relatively new and, therefore, remain inconclusive at this stage.