Islamitisch basisonderwijs in Nederland

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Hoofdstuk 9

9 Conclusion and recommendations

9.1 Answering the sub questions

This study aims to deal with the following main question: *What is the relationship between the religious identity of Islamic primary schools and the societal context within which they operate?* The purpose of this study is to provide insight into the way identity is interpreted in Islamic schools and the forces that play a role in this process, in order to shed more light on the real nature of Islamic primary schools.

The second and third chapters outline the background to the establishment of Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands. The second chapter covers the migration history of Muslims in the Netherlands and it is concluded that family reunion in the 1970s and a heightened sense of self-awareness amongst Muslims created a desire for Islamic education in the 1980s. Towards the end of the 1980s, the level of national organisation of Muslims increased and 1988 saw the foundation of the first two Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands. In addition, in the second chapter we discuss the differences between Islamic primary schools that have arisen since 1988 as a result of the diversity amongst Muslims in the Netherlands.

The third chapter concludes that the institutionalisation of religious education in Dutch primary schools is unique within Europe. This unique situation is based on the right to freedom of education as set down in Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution. Article 23 was passed in 1917 and allows for the establishment of confessional primary schools funded entirely by the state, like secular schools. The autonomy offered to schools in the Netherlands by Article 23, together with the diversity amongst Muslims in the Netherlands, has led to the relatively large number and the great variety of Islamic schools typical of the Netherlands. This variety of schools offers all parents the opportunity to select a school that most closely reflects the home environment.

The desire for Islamic education within the Muslim community in the Netherlands and the freedom to establish Islamic primary schools has resulted in the foundation of a number of Islamic primary schools. From the beginnings in 1988, their number has now grown to 52 schools (2018). This means that Islamic primary schools constitute 0.8% of the total number of primary schools in the Netherlands. Of the total number of primary school pupils, 0.9% are enrolled in an Islamic primary school.

Following the literature review that explains the presence and diversity of Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands, an empirical study was carried out in order to analyse how the religious (Islamic) identity of the schools relates to the societal context in which they operate.

Section B is used to develop a theoretical framework in which school identity is regarded as a product shaped in relation to the school's context and which is subject to continual change. Within the context of an Islamic school, the 'diverse religious identity' and 'Dutch societal context' play a huge role. Diversity within Islam plays a role because the schools aim to attune to the widely divergent home environments of the pupils. Dutch society is important, because the schools want to prepare the children for a future in the Netherlands.

Section B furthermore explains how this study was set up and the measures taken to ensure its reliability. The empirical part of this study consisted of 75 interviews with management, class teachers and religious education teachers in nineteen Islamic primary schools. The selection of participating schools and respondents was structured to arrive at a sample that was as diverse as possible, in order to include all relevant variations within the study. The fieldwork was finalised when saturation point was reached.

All respondents were interviewed in a semi-structured way, which is to say the topics were decided in advance, but the exact formulation of the questions and the order in which the topics were discussed were decided during the interview. We chose this type of interview to ensure the respondents felt comfortable and to make the conversations as natural as possible.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. They were then imported into the qualitative analysis software 'Kwalitan' for analysis. In

Kwalitan the interviews were segmented and coded. The codes were then ordered thematically, leading to the creation of a thematic card index. On studying the quotations thematically, patterns became apparent which are reported in Chapters 5 and 6. The sub questions of this study are covered below:

a) What are the consequences of the interpretation of the religious identity of Islamic primary schools for the entrance and appointment policies of pupils and staff?
b) What are the consequences of the interpretation of the religious identity of Islamic primary schools for behavioural norms and dress code?
c) What are the consequences of the interpretation of the religious identity of Islamic primary schools for the way in which they deal with celebrations which they regard as non-Islamic?
d) What are the consequences of the interpretation of the religious identity of Islamic primary schools for the actual educational content, for instance in art, music and sexual education?
e) What are the consequences of the interpretation of the religious identity of Islamic primary schools for the way in which pupils are prepared for a future in the Netherlands?

The definition of school identity used within this study is:

> *School identity is that which makes a school into the school it is. It is formed on the one hand by the permanent characteristics which the members of the school have in common and on the other by attitude of individuals within the school, thinking and acting creatively and critically, who in turn operate within the perceived area of tension between Islam and the societal context.*

The description of the school identity uses a multidimensional concept of school identity, distinguishing ideological, societal, organisational, pedagogical and educational dimensions of school identity as well as distinguishing between *desired* and *lived* school identity. Besides the newly developed model, three different school concepts were introduced as meth-

odological tools. This theoretical framework is explained in section B in this study.

9.1.1 Entrance and Appointment Policies and Dynamics within the School

Islamic schools welcome any pupil and staff member who is able to support the school's founding principles, regardless of religious background. Due to the increasing influence of social context on the schools, Islamic primary schools are increasingly looking for a balance between Muslim teachers and teachers without a migration background. By employing more teachers without a migration background, the schools aim to teach the pupils how to combine their Islamic and Dutch identities. Converts without a migration background and second and third generation migrants, who are both Muslim and born and bred in the Netherlands, are therefore highly sought-after applicants.

At most schools, the school principles are not formulated excessively strictly - at the time of this study, approximately 60% of the staff at Islamic primary schools was non-Muslim.[386] However, this study showed that non-Muslims sometimes struggle to internalise the norms and values common to Islamic education. Non-Muslims working in an Islamic school may be perfectly able to adopt 'Islamic behavioural norms' rationally; they nonetheless provided many examples showing that it is not easy to 'feel' the different norms. Shaking hands upon meeting, for instance, is so ingrained in a native Dutch upbringing, that non-Muslim teachers easily slip up if they are not vigilant at all times.

Despite the fact that the input of Dutch staff without a migration background is appreciated in Islamic primary schools, and Islamic primary schools sometimes consciously look for non-Muslims, Muslims clearly exert the greatest influence on school policy. Knowledge of Islam and standing within the Islamic school population in Islamic schools simply result in a more influential position. This may not be a conscious process.

[386] The number of Muslim teachers is rising, because an increasing number of Muslims born and bred in the Netherlands are gaining teaching qualifications.

9.1.2 Behavioural Norms and Dress Code

Initially, the behavioural norms and dress code at Islamic schools appear to be strongly influenced by the religious identity of the school. For instance, nearly all schools enforce a dress code for staff and pupils in which women are obliged to wear clothes that hide their body shape. Teachers, parents and pupils often wear a headscarf. On some schools, a headscarf is compulsory for Muslim staff members. The influence of the Islamic school identity is also noticeable in greetings. Although the daily language is Dutch, greetings are often exchanged in Arabic (*as-salām alaykum* [peace be with you] and its reply *wa alaykum as-salām* [and peace be with you too]).

However, behind such outward Islamic expressions, the educational ideals of migrant parents of successive generations tend to develop in the direction of the educational aims of Dutch parents without a migrant background, i.e. in the direction of a more authoritative education and towards individualisation.[387] The sexual norm, noticeable in school in manners and dress codes, tends to change much more slowly.[388] Parents with a Turkish or Moroccan background in particular are keen to hold on to their traditional (Islamic/cultural) values with regard to dealing with the other sex.[389] However, a move towards local Dutch educational ideals is detectable.

An example in support of this trend is the fact that pupils in Islamic primary schools are separated less into single-sex classrooms and within classrooms are separated less into single-sex rows. Even nowadays there are parents within school populations who prefer boys and girls to keep an appropriate distance, particularly in the higher primary years covering ages nine to twelve. Nowadays, Islamic schools often argue that children can only learn to keep an appropriate distance from the other sex when they move in a mixed-sex context so that they can actually practise keep-

[387] In an authoritative, intentional education, the educator has a stronger guiding and encouraging role, with a focus on the autonomy of the child. This type of education is more closely aimed at success in Dutch society, where people are expected to direct and control their own lives.

[388] Pels, 'Oratie: Opvoeden in de multi-etnische stad', 213–216.

[389] Pels en Demant, 'Islam en gender bij Marokkaanse jongeren in Nederland'.

ing an 'appropriate distance'. This way of reasoning fits within the trend away from the first schools, which tended to focus on Islamic expressions, towards the situation nowadays, where schools tend to emphasize the internalisation of Islamic values. The fact that the dress code has been relaxed in many places since the foundation of the first schools, and the option to wear a headscarf is increasingly being left to personal choice, reflects the same trend.

9.1.3 Non-Muslim Celebrations

The question how to deal with both Muslim and non-Muslim celebrations, leads to heated debates in a large number of schools which recur on a regular basis. In the discussion about the approach to non-Muslim celebrations, a distinction is drawn between non-Muslim celebrations that do or do not have a Christian background.

As far as *celebrations with a Christian background are concerned* there is a consensus amongst Islamic primary schools. Celebrations with a Christian background are covered informatively only. The fact that for a number of these celebrations the Christian background has lost virtually all meaning in the Dutch social context, as is the case for instance with St Nicholas, St Martin and Carnival, makes no difference to the policies in Islamic schools.

In the case of *celebrations without a Christian background*, such as birthdays, Mother's Day and King's Day, there are differences between the schools. Birthday celebrations in particular are vigorously debated in many schools. It would appear that for some parents, celebrating birthdays is 'part of' the Dutch societal context or that celebrating birthdays can go hand in hand with an Islamic identity. At the same time, other groups of parents feel strongly that celebrating birthdays is not compatible with an Islamic identity. How to deal with non-Muslim celebrations leads to debate in all Islamic schools and the outcomes vary (see Chapter 5.1.2 for actual examples).

9.1.4 Actual Educational and Subject Material

The actual educational material in Islamic primary schools is affected by the religious identity of the schools, and this is part of the right to freedom

of education in the Netherlands. The content of what is being taught is laid down broadly by law, but schools are free on how to teach that content.

In a number of subject areas, respondents experience a degree of tension between the norms and values in the home environment or the 'Islamic norm' on the one hand, and government requirements or the normal course of action in a Dutch school on the other. Depending on the balance struck by the school between the school's religious identity and its societal context, they may amend the educational material more or less heavily in order to align more closely to their pupils' home environment. Chapter 6 lists P.E., art, music and sex education as examples of subject areas where all schools adjust the educational material to an extent.

Schools that emphasise the religious component of their school identity more strongly, tend to amend the educational material more easily. Schools that give equal or more emphasis to societal context are less prone to adjusting the educational material. They will follow the religious norm when they believe that adjustment of the educational content or form does not hinder their pupils' future prospects. They regard tension between the religious identity of the school and its societal context as an incentive to focus on providing pupils and parents with high-quality information about the importance of the educational material.

The trend discussed earlier, where the educational ideals of Muslim parents with a migration background tend to develop in the direction of those of Dutch parents without a migration background is also found in the actual educational material used, which tends to be adjusted less and less. A small number of respondents from both Muslim and non-Muslim backgrounds in this study were critical of the influence of religious identity on the actual educational content. Such a critical attitude would often lead to further policy changes. Especially in the subject of music, where in many Islamic primary schools melodic instruments are either prohibited or only rarely permitted, respondents express their doubts whether the education prepared the children adequately for a future in the Netherlands.

In most cases, the respondents are proud of the fact that Islamic primary schools teach their pupils to make small concessions without being left with a bad feeling. They are teaching the children to strike a balance between their home environment and society. A concrete example of such

a concession is the fact that children in a number of Islamic primary schools will make drawings of living beings, although the prohibition on the portrayal of living beings is widely supported amongst Sunni Muslims.

9.1.5 Preparation for a Future in the Netherlands

Critics of Islamic primary education regularly express concern whether the schools prepare the children adequately for a future in the Netherlands. However all schools involved in this study see great value in adequately preparing children for their future. Schools with an open school concept pay more attention to the Dutch social context compared to schools with a closed school concept. Respondents would regularly tell emotional stories about children who because of their Islamic background had found themselves 'outside of the group' from an early age in non-Islamic primary schools. There would not be any presents at home at St Nicholas, they did not give birthday parties to which they could invite their classmates, they had to turn down certain foods, their mother might wear a headscarf or they had to deal with difficult questions from classmates about Islam-inspired terrorism. Even just the fact that on Islamic primary schools, the pupils are not continually confronted by their difference, means that they can concentrate on learning. Add to this the fact that educational material which may be sensitive amongst Muslims, such as talking about (homo) sexuality or shaking hands, can be taught tactfully within the context of an Islamic primary school, ensuring more effective absorption. Viewed in this way, Islamic schools may in fact contribute to integration without identity loss and help children prepare for a future in the Netherlands.

9.2 Conclusion

This study provides an analysis of the relationship between the religious identity of Islamic primary schools and their societal context. The main conclusions are that a) there are large differences between Islamic primary schools, in particular due to the widely diverging Muslim population within the schools; b) there is a clear trend whereby the importance of societal context in most Islamic primary schools is increasing; c) Islamic primary schools provide a sense of safety amongst their students.

This sense of safety is simply based on the fact that parents and children feel they are accepted, heard and trusted in the school. Since parents and pupils feel safer and better understood, the influence of education can be greater when discussing sensitive topics.

Virtually all the interviews held as part of this study took place in Islamic primary schools. When visiting the schools, I encountered open, friendly, polite and curious children; similar to the children I have in my own classroom as a teacher. I also observed highly recognisable situations in the way in which children played together outside, spoke together in the corridors and expressed their curiosity about my presence and intentions, as a stranger in the school. The impression I got of the schools in practice is very different from the images and judgements that prevail in society and in the media.

On the contrary: To me it is surprising to find hardly any positive stories in the media about Islamic primary schools, even though I have identified extremely positive trends. It appears as if the public and media opinions are simply not interested in more positive reporting on Islamic primary schools. It therefore gives me great pleasure to contribute an honest and nuanced report on Islamic education to our store of public sources.

This study provides an analysis of the relationship between the religious identity of Islamic primary schools and their societal context. In order to do this, a new model was developed for studying the identity of Islamic primary schools. I have gratefully used existing definitions and research methods as used in Christian primary education. In order to investigate the school identity of Islamic primary schools, the definition and research methods must focus on the internal discussions on the course to be followed, as various forms of Islam are represented within the school population. In addition, the way in which Islamic primary schools continually sound their policy against their societal context is unique to Dutch primary education.

With regard to the school identity of Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands two important conclusions stand out:

First of all, the interviews showed that although Islamic primary schools share a foundational ('Islamic') basis, they nonetheless display

great variety. It is precisely because there are so few Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands (0.8% of the total number of primary schools in 2013-2018), that a great variety of ethnic/culture backgrounds are represented amongst the parents and staff in Islamic primary schools, who may follow different doctrines and may show variation in the meaning of Islam in their daily lives. They share the expectation that the Islamic primary school will align more closely with their own specific Islamic home environment. The fact that all concerned refer to 'Islam' but that there are nonetheless a number of concurrent manifestations gathered under this common denominator, encourages an internal dialogue in Islamic primary schools where the divergent points of view are combined into a joint, well thought-through '*desired identity*'. A concrete example of this process is the mutual decision about which 'Muslim celebrations' will or will not be held in school.

In this study the most important differences between the schools are ascribed to the type of balance struck by a school to align with the Islamic home environment of the pupils on the one hand and to fit in with the Dutch context for which the children are being prepared on the other hand (referred to above as the 'school concept'). This balance appears to be fundamental to a large number of other choices made by Islamic primary schools, from a compulsory dress code to explicit and implicit manners, and the concrete educational material used in music lessons and sexual education.

A second important conclusion of this study is that in all Islamic primary schools within this study a trend appears to be developing whereby the influence of the Dutch context on the decisions taken in Islamic primary schools is increasing. It may be more accurate to describe this process as an increasing internalisation of the Dutch context by parents and teachers. This trend can be illustrated by the following three examples: In case of vacancies, there is a conscious search for applicants with a Dutch background. Secondly, whereas in the past several schools required all female teachers to wear a headscarf (regardless of religious background), now the number of schools is increasing where even Muslim teachers are free to choose for themselves. Thirdly, the portrayal of living beings used to be avoided completely at a large number of schools, whereas now an in-

creasing number of schools see this as an essential part of a child's development.[390] As far as the content of religious education is concerned, this trend means that attention is moved from Islamic expression to an internalisation of the Islamic religion.

Because of this trend, most Islamic primary schools are developing more and more in the direction of other confessional and secular primary schools. I suspect there to be many similarities with Orthodox Jewish and Orthodox Christian schools. One important difference with these schools is that the diversity amongst the school population in an Islamic primary school is greater than in Orthodox-Jewish or Orthodox Christian schools, who tend to attract a more homogeneous Orthodox school population. In addition, Islamic primary schools are far more experienced in liaising with the rest of society, precisely because they interweave their societal context so strongly in their identity policy.

Despite the increase in similarities between Islamic primary schools and secular, and most confessional, primary schools, there are a number of important differences. I distinguish the following six differences:

Firstly, in their school population. Although the schools are open to non-Muslim pupils, at the time of this study only Muslim pupils were enrolled in the schools studied.

Secondly, in Islamic primary schools, diverse Muslim prayers and diverse Muslim celebrations are held and diverse Islamic religious education is taught.

Thirdly, there are different norms relating to sexuality and the separation of the sexes. In general, the norms and values of Muslims tend to de-

[390] A small number of Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands operates a deliberately closed school concept and in these schools there is less of a tendency to move towards a more open school concept. Respondents working in a school with a closed school concept or who had experience of working in a school with a closed school concept said that development towards a more open school concept was seen as undesirable by a large number of the parents and staff at these schools. Schools operating a more closed school concept tend to attract parents and teachers who adhere to a more strongly orthodox Islamic doctrine.

velop in the direction of the norms and values common in the Dutch context. Sexuality and the separation of the sexes are however still an exception to this trend. Islamic primary schools are different from other primary schools in the distinction made between boys and girls, where the children are taught to keep a modest distance. Although there are large differences between schools in this area, too, teachers working in the nine to twelve age bracket report less of a tendency for pupils to be in love than on non-Islamic primary schools. Sex education is adjusted to the Islamic norm: for instance, it tends to be taught separately to boys and girls and there is a greater emphasis on moral education.

The fourth difference with other primary schools is the fact that Islamic primary schools in general tend to reach the same core targets, but that because of the Muslim basis of the school, some subjects are taught in a different way or using different material.

The fifth difference is that Muslim parents, teachers and management appear to have a greater influence on policy making in Islamic primary schools. It is more usual for Muslims to provide the framework. In the (few) cases where non-Muslims are in management positions in Islamic schools, they report a certain degree of dependency on Muslims with regard to matters touching identity.

The sixth difference observed is that Islamic primary schools provide a sense of safety for parents and pupils. This meant that a number of respondents were able to give examples of group conversations about sensitive topics which they felt were better absorbed by the pupils because of this sense of safety. One of the examples given was a discussion about homosexuality, where Muslim children in a non-Islamic primary school would probably drop out of the discussion mentally from the assumption that the content of the message would not fit with a Muslim way of life. However, when this topic is discussed within the safe context of the Islamic school, the pupils at least appear to be open to the message for longer.

9.3 Recommendations

This study has resulted in a number of recommendations for policy making, the area of education, the public and political debate and follow-up research.

9.3.1 Recommendations for Policy Making

Within this study we have clearly found added value in Islamic primary schools. It was found that Islamic schools can contribute to the integration of Muslims into Dutch society. This added value of Islamic schools is currently absent in discussions of Islamic education within educational policy making and politics. The sense of safety provided by Islamic primary schools and the fact that the influence of the school is greater due to that sense of safety resulting in a situation in which difficult subjects can easier be discussed should be part of the debate about Islamic education and the future of Article 23. Following this recommendation will lead to policies that do justice to the real situation in present-day Islamic primary schools.

9.3.2 Recommendations for the Area of Education

I have two recommendations for the area of education. The first recommendation resulting from this study is aimed at all *Islamic primary schools with an 'open school concept'*, in other words, Islamic schools where societal context has a relatively large influence. These schools claim explicitly to strive for a balance between Muslim teachers and teachers born and bred in the Netherlands, including non-Muslims. In some cases, the schools explicitly strive for a balance between Islamic and non-Islamic teachers. However, in practice, none of the interviews expressed appreciation for the non-Muslim background of the teachers. Whilst there was appreciation for the commitment of those teachers, there was a lack of explicit appreciation for their non-Muslim background. We therefore recommend expressing such appreciation and strengthening the self-esteem of non-Muslim teachers. The non-Muslim teachers I interviewed make every effort to empathise with the Islamic background of the pupils. According to the vision statements of schools which operate an 'open school concept', they are as important for teaching dual loyalty as are the Muslim teachers. However, when assessing themselves, non-Muslim teachers tended to em-

phasise the times when they felt they fell short as non-Muslims - they do not appear to be aware of their own added value as non-Muslims in the education of pupils in Islamic primary schools. Following this recommendation may lead to an improvement in the position of non-Muslims in Islamic primary schools, facilitating the development of a bi-cultural identity for pupils and possibly increasing the job satisfaction of non-Muslim staff.

A second recommendation is aimed at all *non-Islamic primary schools with large numbers of Islamic pupils.* These schools could benefit from the solutions found by Islamic primary schools for multicultural tensions that arise within schools (see in particular Chapter 6 for examples). The most important recommendation is to improve background knowledge around the areas of tension, allowing teachers to act more sensitively. I am of the opinion that this could prevent a large number of problems with a relatively small investment of time. An important lesson from Islamic primary education is that education can be more powerful when parents and pupils feel safe and when they feel the school stands with them as a partner, working together to solve tensions. This would make it easier to discuss 'sensitive topics'. Finally, it is worth investigating the way in which Islamic primary schools contribute to the development of dual loyalty from a safe environment. Implementing this recommendation may lead to easier interaction with large groups of Muslims in the school.

9.3.3 Recommendations for Follow-up Research

During the course of this study, it surprised me that the development that Islamic primary schools have gone through over the last thirty years is so little taken into account in the public and political debate. These debates are still dominated by images and judgments based on a number of exceptional situations from the first years of Islamic primary education. With this study I want to recommend various established media, to show how Islamic primary schools now contribute to the integration of Muslims in the Dutch society in order to inform the public and political debate.

9.3.4 Recommendations for Follow-up Research

Although a relatively large amount of data was gathered in this study, it was nonetheless a qualitative study, whose conclusions cannot simply be generalised over the totality of Islamic primary education. In a quantitative study on a larger scale, the influence of religious identity and societal context could be investigated further.

Within this study, it was decided to limit the data to management, religious education teachers and class teachers. However, the study showed that parents, too, can be influential in the formation of school identity. In order to better understand the dynamics in Islamic primary schools that affect the formation of school identity, it would be of interest to include parents in any follow-up study.

Another recommendation for further research related to the dynamics within schools, would be follow-up research focusing on head teachers and religious education teachers in order to clarify the relationship between the two. Both functions were shown to be extremely influential when studying the school dynamics. Because relatively speaking, head teachers tended to stay at a school for a shorter period of time than religious education teachers, the question arose whether a religious education teacher holding a strong position both within the school and the local Muslim community can in fact be directed by a head teacher. In order to collect more data about the limits set by head teachers to the influence of a religious education teacher, ex-head teachers were approached by email at a later stage in the study with the additional question whether in the case of a difference of opinion; a powerful religious education teacher can be prevailed over by a head teacher.[391] However, no clear answer was forthcom-

[391] We formulated the question as follows: Religious education teachers are not only very influential in the content of the religious education lessons, but also in guarding the 'Islamic identity' of the school. They give solicited and unsolicited advice, they are regarded as an authority by Muslim teachers, and a go-to source of information for non-Muslim teachers. Religious education teachers are often associated with a particular school for a very long time, longer than most head

ing, although insight into this relationship could lead to a different image of the dynamics within a school.

At the end of the day, education is all about the pupils. Although this study provides insight into the way in which school policy is formulated and how this is translated into actual lessons, there is no investigation of how those lessons are internalised by the pupils. It would be extremely interesting to study the effect of Islamic primary education on pupils. Interviews with ex-pupils of Islamic schools and Islamic pupils who did not attend Islamic schools could be a rich source of information to investigate what the pupils feel Islamic primary education adds to preparation for a future in the Netherlands.

Islamic primary schools help to find a balance between the Islamic home environment and the non-Islamic societal context. However, Paragraph 6.1 uncovers a trend that means that the home environment of Muslim children is increasingly developing in the direction of the societal context. It would therefore be interesting to investigate whether the desire for Islamic primary schools is connected with the degree of 'safety' of the societal context experienced by parents, a desire which probably decreases with the length of time they themselves have been in the Netherlands. It may also be of interest to include the role of Islamic weekend schools [392] in this study. A specific focus on the desire for Islamic weekend schooling could deal with the question whether an Islamic primary school, whose

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teachers. As a head teacher, would you be able to prevail over the religious education teacher if you wanted to?

[392] Islamic weekend schooling is education that children follow outside normal school time, mostly at the weekend, in a mosque or in an institution connected with a mosque. This type of schooling is completely separate from Islamic primary schools and is mostly concerned with teaching Arabic, reading the Koran and Muslim education. (see Pels, Lahri en El Madkouri, *Pedagogiek in moskee Al Wahda*.

education content is controlled and regulated, replaces the desire for Islamic weekend schooling, where this is not the case.[393]

Finally, a comparative study into school identity could be carried out in schools with different denominations. Secular, Catholic, Protestant, Reformed, Free, Jewish and Hindu schools could be compared in order to determine whether similar processes take place in the formation of their identity or whether the way in which school identity is interpreted is closely associated with its particular denomination. Similarities and differences are relevant to the discussion about freedom of education and the social and political desire to arrive at one type of primary school that can be attended by all children. Such a study could also contribute to the formulation of a set of requirements for educational renewal which would lead to the newly formed educational system being arranged in such a way that all parties can feel recognised, safe and welcome.

[393] Pels e.a., *Pedagogiek Dar al-Hudaa*; Pels, Lahri en El Madkouri, *Pedagogiek in moskee Othman*; Pels, Doğan en El Madkouri, *Pedagogiek in moskee Ayafofya*; Pels, Lahri en El Madkouri, *Pedagogiek in moskee Al Wahda*.