

Jamiatul-ilm Wal Huda

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Graham Robinson
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Date of last inspection	13 November 2006

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

The school serves as both a day and boarding school, providing male, Muslim students with both an Islamic and secular education.

The school is managed by a group of trustees, headed by the principal. It relies on the local community and donations to fund ongoing costs and developments. To ensure that the service is potentially available to all, fees paid by parents are relatively low.

The school and boarding facilities span two buildings. However, the boarding accommodation for those pupils under 18 years is situated in just the one building. The school has been purpose built. As well as classrooms and boarding provision, the school has its own Mosque. The grounds have a specific play area for students where a variety of organised and improvised games can be played.

Summary

This inspection was aligned with Bridge Schools Inspectorate who were tasked to judge and report on the standards and regulations in place for Section 162a inspections. This has been reported separately. Ofsted's legal responsibility is to inspect welfare provision for boarding pupils under the age of 18. At the time of the visit, records show the school had 430 pupils of which 198 board. Currently, there are 97 boarding pupils aged below 18 years.

During this full, announced inspection, all the key standards were inspected along with any recommendations made at the previous inspection.

A number of positive improvements have taken place to the campus since the previous inspection. This includes improvement to the fabric and layout of the buildings along with ground work to various areas which has improved general safety. One significant development is the building of a link to join the two buildings together. This reduces the need to go outside when moving from one building to another. Plans are in place for further development of the campus.

The school continues to be well organised and managed, providing a calm, safe environment that encourages and promotes learning. The principal is well respected by staff, pupils and their parents alike and he provides a positive input that strongly influences the way the school operates and performs.

Pupils are happy to be at the school and are well settled. No serious issues or concerns were raised by them or staff. The promotion of equality and diversity is good throughout the standards inspected.

The report highlights some recommendations to support practice developments. They cover the method used for recording prescribed medication, making an addition to the safeguarding policy, reviewing issues linked to pupils' privacy, making safe part of the newly built play area and reviewing the current arrangements for weekend activities.

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous report contained five recommended actions. Each one has been addressed positively by the school leading to improvements in the consistency of recording the administering of medication. All Criminal Record Bureau checks undertaken on staff are now to an enhanced level and improvements have been made to the quality of evidence retained on site to show that suitable recruitment procedures are taking place.

Other areas of improvement include the introduction of more formalised arrangements for the testing and servicing of electrical and gas appliances. The school now provides parents and pupils with the contact details for Ofsted.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The health needs of pupils is being promoted positively. The school has its own policies and guidance for staff which is implemented well in practice. Good links have been developed with local medical services and pupils have swift access to a doctor when necessary. Records show if there is any doubt in staff minds when a pupil becomes ill or suffers an accident, then immediate medical assistance is sought through either the local doctor or a trip to the accident and emergency department.

Details of pupils' health needs, including any allergies they may have is obtained from parents when they enrol their child. It is at this stage where parents provide written consent for the school to obtain any necessary medical treatments and for the administering of medication. Duty rotas show a good spread of staff being available who have received first aid training. All pupils feel they are well looked after and have no concerns about health issues.

Medication is appropriately managed to ensure safe practice. This includes the storage, disposal, administering and recording of both prescribed and non prescribed medication. The system used to record prescribed medication whilst effective, has been used by the school for some time and does not take account of recent developments made in this area.

A new medical room has been created which includes en-suite facilities. It is located in a place that allows staff to monitor and look after any sick pupils who use the facility. This is one of a number of significant improvements the school has made since the previous inspection.

Feedback from pupils about the quality, quantity and choice of food is entirely positive. All catering is undertaken on site and menus reflect the background and culture of the school. Investment has been made in training, resulting in a number of staff and pupils having completed appropriate food hygiene awareness courses.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The safety and rights of pupils are being protected. The arrangements for handling complaints, safeguarding pupils, bullying and behaviour management are good. All pupils either in writing or verbally confirm they feel safe within the school and it is a safe place to live. Staff are vigilant and respond quickly to any suggestion that bullying may be occurring. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place, but generally bullying is not problematic in what is, a well ordered, calm and respectful community.

The school maintains close links with local safeguarding agencies and has named, trained staff in place tasked with specific safeguarding duties within the school. A recently updated safeguarding policy is in place and the school has clear procedures for responding to allegations or suspicions of abuse. However, the policy fails to cover one area that is suggested for inclusion in the minimum standards. All staff received updated safeguarding training at the beginning of this school year, with the school looking to refresh this area regularly.

Boarding is well managed, with clear policies, guidance and information made available to parents and pupils in the variety of documentation provided regarding behaviour, discipline, the use of sanctions and rewards. Pupils have a clear understanding of the rules in place, feeling they are generally fair.

Pupils feel any worries, concerns or complaints they may have are taken seriously and responded to quickly and fairly. They understand how to access the complaints procedure if necessary, with written information being available to them. The locked suggestion box, where pupils can post any concerns privately, is viewed positively by all pupils, with many examples of the effectiveness of this system being provided by them.

Fire procedures are clearly laid out in the information provided to pupils and staff, with fire notices displayed prominently around the campus. Records are maintained to show that fire, gas and electrical equipment is serviced appropriately and tested regularly. Fire drills take place within the suggested frequencies and pupils are able to give examples of their participation in this process.

Shared sleeping accommodation is provided for pupils below 18 years. Most are comfortable with the arrangements and have no issues or concerns. However, a minority expressed some mild concerns regarding their privacy, particularly when changing in bedrooms, highlighting the observation windows in bedroom doors and staff or senior students occasionally entering a room without the occupant hearing them knock.

The arrangements for vetting, selecting and recruiting staff are good, with adequate evidence held on site to support this view. All staff and senior students receive enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks and are not allowed to commence their duties until satisfactory clearances have been obtained. The school's safer recruitment policy forms part of the overall safeguarding policy and takes account of the most recent guidance available.

The school has made significant improvements to its security arrangements with the building of an external wall encircling the whole campus, along with the instillation of electronic gates. Once on campus, access to either of the two buildings is by a recently installed finger print recognition system which provides added security. Appropriate procedures for vetting visitors are in place. This heightened security is popular with pupils who are comfortable with these new arrangements. Appropriate steps are taken internally to ensure boarding areas are secure from public intrusion.

A significant amount of work to the grounds has been completed since the previous inspection, creating a safer, external environment for pupils. For example, large areas of waste land have been cleared with any areas used for storage being fenced off. A new fenced play area has been created which is popular with students. However, work to this area remains unfinished, particularly to the surface of the ground.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The school has a number of systems in place to provide individual support to pupils. This includes tutoring and mentoring systems. There is also an independent listener who is a frequent visitor to the school, playing a supporting role with pupils' pastoral care. This role and input is viewed positively by many of the pupils.

Equality and diversity is recognised and valued. The school employs and accommodates people from wide ranging backgrounds, which compliments the diverse community that exists. The aims and objectives of the school promotes pupils spiritual and moral individuality, whilst respecting the individuality and spirituality of others. Pupils speak positively about these issues. The school has excellent links with a variety of external bodies and organisations. An example of this being the hosting of a visit by Cathedral Deans in April 2010. The school keeps a community cohesion file that contains positive examples of the relationships maintained with other bodies and organisations.

Pupils describe a variety of leisure pursuits they are involved with during free time with the new outside play areas, table tennis and pool being particular popular. However, some representation was made to the inspection team requesting the school to consider organising more activities, particularly at weekend. This request has been passed to the principal for consideration.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The recent creation of the school (Shura) council has led to significant improvements and opportunities for pupils to contribute towards some aspects of the boarding arrangements. This has been a popular move for both the elected members of the council and their peers. Meetings are taking place regularly with minutes produced to record the areas discussed, decisions taken and their outcomes.

Pupils have no issues or concerns regarding the systems in place to maintain contact with parents and families. They have access to telephones, which are kept in full working order. Pupils are now allowed to bring a mobile phone to the school on the understanding they have limited access to them so as not to interfere with studies. This has been a popular move for pupils who feel it has enhanced contact with home. Pupils and parents are provided with written contact details for appropriate external agencies such as child line and Ofsted.

The systems in place to introduce new pupils into school life are good. Pupils report they were well received and supported by staff, senior students and their peers at this time. A number provided good examples of this by describing how they were supported positively through bouts of homesickness. The informal mentoring systems introduced with pupils giving each other support, has also proved popular.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Pupils are satisfied with the arrangements provided by the school regarding the safe keeping of money and personal possessions. A banking system is in place and all pupils have their own

lockable facility located in their bedroom. Pupils confirm they have access to money that allows them to make purchases at the school shop and vending machines, along with other purchases made at weekends.

The general standard of décor, fixtures, fittings, state of repair and cleanliness around the school and within boarding areas is good. A number of improvements to the fabric of the building and the general environment were noted. They include bedrooms that are well lit, ventilated and have recently had new carpets laid. Some bedrooms have a number of occupants but this is accepted by pupils who confirm they are comfortable within their environment. Pupils confirmed the school was able to maintain good levels of heating during the recent prolonged cold spell.

The school has added to its toilet and bathing facilities since the previous inspection. Pupils raised no issues or concerns regarding the arrangements and facilities in place for their ablutions.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The organisation and management of the school is good. This is reflected in the clear management arrangements and effective leadership from the principal, resulting in a well-established, ordered, stable environment that allows pupils to flourish and grow. Effective planning, coupled with efficient implementation allows for pupils to be looked after safely. Pupils are happy and pleased to be at the school.

A level of consistency exists with the organisation of boarding practice. Senior staff who are influential in this area have been at the school for a long time and are able to ensure any new staff quickly pick up and embrace long standing working practices. All developments to the school's policies, procedures and practice are clearly aligned with the boarding school national minimum standards and the Every Child Matters framework.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The school has a broad and balanced curriculum designed to provide pupils with knowledge, skills and understanding of other cultures, societies and environments. A culture of high expectation and self discipline exists where pupils learn about taking responsibility for themselves, along with promoting the rights and respect of others.

Staff have relevant written guidance, policies and procedures in place to support their practice. They are reviewed and updated regularly. This provides an up to date framework for working practices that are designed to meet the diverse needs of pupils.

Pupils are aware of which responsible adults are on duty including overnight cover. The school has an active training programme for staff which includes individual training such as safer recruitment through to group training such as first aid and safeguarding. The school maintains appropriate training records.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- revise and update the format used to record the administering of prescribed medication to take account of recent developments made in this area (NMS 15.12)
- ensure the school's safeguarding policy includes a requirement for a referral to be made within 24 hours in writing, or with written confirmation of a telephone referral, of any allegation or suspicion of abuse, to the local safeguarding services (NMS 3.2)
- review issues around boarding pupils privacy with particular regard to the observation windows in bedroom doors and the working practices of staff and senior boarders when they have to enter a bedroom when a pupil may be changing clothes or undressing (NMS 37.2)
- improve the surface of the new play areas to reduce the risk of accidents occurring (NMS 47.5)
- consider improving the frequency and range of supervised activities for boarding pupils with particular reference to weekends. (NMS 11.5)