

# Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya College

Independent school standard inspection report

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya College is an independent Islamic boarding school for boys, dedicated to providing Islamic as well as secular education. Opened in 1992, it has a 22 acre rural site four miles southeast of Kidderminster. All teaching blocks and residential accommodation are set within the college campus. Students are allocated to hostels according to their age group. There are currently 211 students on roll, aged from 11 to 24 years. There are no students with special educational needs and none at an early stage of acquiring English. Madinatul Uloom aims to, 'educate the students and instil in them the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and practices of our Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as well as other arts and sciences'. It also strives to, 'promote and cultivate good behaviour, morals, mutual respect and tolerance'. It was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2007. The boarding provision was last inspected in March 2009.

## Evaluation of the school

Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya College provides a good quality of education for its students and meets its aims very successfully. Students benefit greatly from the breadth of the curriculum, including the outstanding Islamic provision which makes a profound contribution to their personal development. The behaviour of students and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are good, firmly rooted in the strong relationships between all members of the school community. Improvements since the last inspection have ensured that the school meets all the regulatory requirements for an independent school.

## Quality of education

The school provides a good, appropriately balanced curriculum within which the Islamic provision is outstanding and arrangements for secular subjects are good. There is an appropriate emphasis, in the secular curriculum, on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science; however, the time allocated for English is insufficient to ensure that some students achieve the success of which they are capable by the end of Year 11. The study of humanities, physical education, general studies and information and communication technology (ICT) provides a suitable

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

balance to ensure that students are well prepared for life beyond school. Art has been introduced since the time of the last inspection, providing important aesthetic experiences for all students in Years 7 to 9. The range of art activities is restricted at present as the subject is not taught in a room with wet facilities. The teaching day is relatively long as Islamic studies are taught daily between 8.30am and 11.30am, but students respond well and retain their concentration and commitment to learning throughout. There is seamless continuity between the school day and students' religious observance and supervision of their 'homework', together with opportunities for on-site sports and recreation. There is a limited number of trips and visits to support and enhance themes studied in the curriculum. GCSE examinations are available in a limited range of subjects, restricting the opportunity for some students to achieve five or more higher grades.

The Islamic Studies curriculum is outstanding and enables the school to fulfil its core aims. It starts with phonics, the sounds that letters make, teaching of Arabic lettering and progresses successfully to recitation (Tajweed) with systematic testing and monitoring that is referenced to capabilities and progress. The school awards its own internal certificates, in which students achieve outstanding success; these are recognised throughout the UK Muslim community as being quality assured. This is further supported by progression to the interpretation of texts (Tafseer) and Muslim ethics (Sunnah learning) linked to Qur'an and Hadith. Some instructional teaching is delivered in English within contexts for students, as appropriate.

Older students in Key Stage 4 commence Urdu and Arabic studies with co-translation and reading in the relevant scripts. Classical Arabic is taught at a foundation level to GCSE with some mixed age classes covering Years 9–11, and some post-16 students progress to AS Arabic and A-level Urdu, while continuing their Islamic religious studies. This range of provision ensures that all students are able to pursue their Islamic curriculum to an appropriate individual level. The school has an Islamic library with an outstanding collection of texts, historic Qur'ans and Islamic commentaries that approach a university level in their range and academic standard.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. In the secular curriculum, most lessons are appropriately planned with clear objectives and students have a good understanding of what they are expected to do. The best lessons demonstrate good questioning by teachers, enabling students to clarify and develop their understanding, and ensuring that teachers have a good assessment of the progress students are making. Students express themselves well in both written and spoken English when tasks are challenging and structured in a way which enables students to respond with understanding. In less successful lessons, teachers talk too much and students are too passive. In a minority of lessons, teachers underestimate the abilities of students and tasks are not sufficiently challenging to ensure that all are applying intellectual effort to the standards of which they are capable. The quality of resources used to support learning is variable and students do not always have access to high quality books and materials to provide sufficient stimulus and challenge. Teaching in the Islamic curriculum is systematic and progressive with clear assessment points. Students understand the style of learning required of them, and report very favourably on their ability to learn and make progress. Students'

behaviour in all lessons is outstanding and their positive attitudes contribute effectively to the pace of learning and progress.

Assessment of students' progress in Islamic studies is continuous and effective. Students receive instant personal feedback on the quality of their learning and they appreciate the rate of progress which they experience. In the secular curriculum, assessment is increasingly based on good use of National Curriculum levels. Students are aware of the levels awarded and appreciate the written and oral feedback which they receive. There are no opportunities for students to take part in the assessment of their own work and that of their peers, to increase their understanding of the levels required and how to improve their work. Reports to parents provide systematic and helpful information, although targets for improvement are more often related to attitude and effort than specific subject-related next steps. Assessment information is recorded in a manner which assists teachers with a clear overview of progress from year to year. This information is not currently used systematically to determine whether rates of progress for individual students are appropriate in relation to their prior attainment. Students make good progress in their learning overall. Results in GCSE examinations are satisfactory; better in mathematics and science than in English. Progress for the majority of students in their Islamic studies is outstanding and the majority achieve creditable success in their recitation and knowledge of the Qur'an.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is outstanding. Students report that a strong sense of community and participation underlies their sense of enjoyment. They are unanimous in this perception. Throughout the school, there is a commitment to the personal development of students; their spiritual and moral development is at the heart of the school's practice. Students report that their academic and pastoral needs are well met, with personal learning targets regularly offered and monitored. 'We would not want to change things here', was one student's comment. Older students act as group spiritual leaders in school for prayer. They are involved in community work in their localities where they act as role-models for other young Muslims, given their outstandingly high standards of conduct and Qur'anic recitation. Behaviour and attendance are outstanding and contribute to the effective learning environment of the school.

Students report that these values pervade the residential provision also, extending into the quality of relationships between students and with staff at weekends and during their free time. The secular curriculum offers good opportunities to gain life-skills and wider learning. ICT skills are well promoted. Mathematics in the school is well taught and literacy progress is outstanding in Islamic contexts, and satisfactory in English, providing a secure basis for life beyond school. Students report that they take these values back into their local communities and friendship groups on regular weekend visits. These values are well balanced with a respect for different cultures and beliefs, which students recognise as an important feature of their faith.

Students develop an Islamic understanding of commercial activity through the concept of Al Amin, including fair dealing, charitable giving (Zakat) and the non-acceptance of interest. The humanities teaching includes citizenship elements, such as an understanding of the British Constitution. There is provision for appropriate careers guidance for students in Years 10 and 11, although the limited careers resources are dated. All graduates of the school are interviewed by the headteacher with a focus on their intentions for the future. Many students aspire to university education and in this respect resources are good and current. Overall, students are well prepared for their various futures in, for example, further education, or employment in engineering, finance and a range of fulfilling careers.

Students contribute routinely to the life of the school; they have house duties including cleaning routines that require responsibility and that are checked by prefects. They act as monitors in the two libraries (general and Islamic). They show environmental awareness by clearing litter, conserving energy and re-cycling materials. They run a healthy school tuck-shop.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are good and are implemented consistently. The school ensures that students are safe and comfortable in both the school and residential provision. A good number of staff have completed higher level child protection training, and all staff are familiar with policy and procedures. Recruitment of staff follows secure guidelines and all appropriate checks are completed to ensure their suitability to fulfil the roles to which they are appointed. The school's health and safety policies and continuous monitoring of risks ensure that students work in a safe environment. An overwhelming majority of students report that they feel safe and that the school encourages them to adopt healthy lifestyles. This is evident in the balanced diet provided for students, and the extensive opportunities for outside play and organised sport. Aspects of the general studies curriculum, school assemblies and the Islamic curriculum provide an appropriate emphasis on avoiding the risks associated with smoking, alcohol and substance abuse. The school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as amended and has a three year plan to improve access to the curriculum, information and premises. The school has undertaken an audit of accessibility of the curriculum and premises and potential improvements have been costed. Restricted funding does not enable the school to implement any improvements to the accommodation, at present.

## **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

All required checks have been undertaken to ensure the suitability of the staff and proprietors to work with children. All checks are recorded in an appropriate single central register.

## **Premises of and accommodation at the school**

The school premises were originally built as an army barracks and have previously been used for teacher training and as a girls' school. The premises used for teaching include classrooms and large halls which provide an appropriate location for teaching the Qur'anic curriculum. The concern raised at the last inspection about the acoustics in the teaching hall has been addressed by the use of screens to separate teaching groups and by reducing the number of classes in each hall. Arrangements are now satisfactory. The classrooms are generally large enough to accommodate the current sizes of teaching groups. Specialist accommodation for science and information and communication technology adds to the quality of the teaching accommodation. The premises are maintained in a satisfactory condition and a continuous programme of refurbishment is implemented as resources permit. New double glazed window units have, for example, been installed recently in a number of the boarding residences. The extensive site provides good facilities for outdoor sports and games.

## **Provision of information**

The school prospectus provides parents and prospective with appropriate information, including details of boarding, in line with regulatory requirements. This document makes clear to parents that all the required policy documents are available at the school and on request. Parents and carers are given access to the school's child protection policy at the time of admission of students. Parents and carers are provided with comprehensive annual reports on the attainment and progress of their sons.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's policy and procedures for managing complaints are appropriate and meet statutory requirements.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Provide sufficient training and professional development opportunities to ensure that all staff use a range of teaching methods appropriate to the subjects taught.
- Ensure that sufficient time and adequate resources are allocated to the teaching of English to enhance students' progress in Key Stage 4.

- Provide opportunities for students to take part in self- and peer-assessment of their work in order to improve their understanding of the standards required.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	✓			
The behaviour of pupils	✓			

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim residential college
<b>Date school opened</b>	1992
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–24 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 211
<b>Number of boarders</b>	Boys: 189
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£500
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£2,000
<b>Address of school</b>	Butts Lane, Summerfield, Kidderminster DY10 4BH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01562 66894
<b>Email address</b>	info@madinatul-ulbom.org
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Hans
<b>Proprietor</b>	Board of Trustees