

# Darul Uloom Al Arabiya Al Islamiya

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Declan McCarthy
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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>

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.<sup>3</sup>

## Information about the school

Darul Uloom is an independent residential educational institute for Muslim boys set in a rural location within travelling distance of Bury town centre. The school opened in October 1979 and caters for students in the 11-23 age group; it offers both secondary secular and further education as well as advanced Islamic education. There are 342 students on roll aged from 11 to 19 years of age and no students have a statement of special educational needs. The last inspection of the education provision took place in December 2004 and the most recent social care inspection was in March 2008. The school strives to promote and cultivate good behaviour, a moral life and respect and tolerance of other faiths and cultures. It aims to ensure that students achieve the best in terms of their faith responsibilities and their role as active citizens in the community. The aim of the school is to produce young talented individuals who play a positive role in their communities and become exemplary British citizens.

## Evaluation of the school

Darul Uloom provides a good quality of education and care for its students and meets its aims. A good curriculum and good teaching and assessment enable all students to make good progress. Outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development fully reflects the aims and ethos of the school in producing well-rounded individuals. Students' outstanding behaviour has a positive impact on their learning and achievements. The school meets safeguarding requirements well. The quality of boarding provision is good and has a positive impact on students' personal development and well-being. The school has made good progress since its last inspection in meeting the few outstanding regulations and now meets all regulations for independent schools and continues to meet all the national minimum standards for boarding.

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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)

<sup>3</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga\\_20000014\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000014_en_1)

## Quality of education

The curriculum is good. All regulations are met and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Humanities subjects, including history geography and citizenship are now taught at Key Stage 3 with planned opportunities in place for learning history as part of the English Baccalaureate from September 2011. Subjects covered at Key Stage 3 include English, mathematics, science, Urdu, physical education, information and communication technology (ICT) and the humanities. Art is taught through activities in science, ICT and through calligraphy. At Key Stage 4 students have opportunities to enter for GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science, ICT, Urdu and Arabic. At post-16, students participate in AS and A-level courses in ICT, Urdu, Arabic, English, mathematics and law. The opportunities to take the full GCSE course in ICT and progress on to A level, and to take A-level law, are new developments in the curriculum since the last inspection. In order to extend the curriculum, the school has extended the weekly taught time and introduced opportunities to study A levels after school hours in the boarding provision.

The strong emphasis on personal, social and health education (PSHE) permeates the life of the school and is reflected fully in its ethos. It is promoted through a number of subjects including Islamic studies, English and citizenship. Opportunities for work-related learning are provided. Careers advice is provided to students through the Connexions service and the school provides some opportunities to prepare students for the world of work through work experience in a local mosque. However, these experiences are limited.

The Islamic course covers higher Islamic Studies including study of the *Qur'an*, *Hadith* (sayings of the Prophet), *Tafseer* (meaning of the Qur'an) and *Fiqh* (Islamic laws). Its purpose is to train and nurture young Muslims on their social and religious conduct in light of Islamic principles. Courses are tailor-made to meet the requirements of universities and colleges. A six-year course leads to a degree in Islamic theology, which is recognised by some universities. The Islamic course is well planned so that a natural progression is made throughout each year.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge which ensures that students learn new skills and concepts proficiently. Lessons are well planned. The brisk pace of lessons enable students to focus on learning and their excellent behaviour contributes positively to the learning and the good progress they make in both their religious and secular studies. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources to support learning, particularly ICT. Teachers in secular subjects provide good levels of questioning to challenge learning; this keeps students involved and eager to participate. However this feature is not always seen in the Islamic lessons where traditional didactic methods of teaching are used. All teachers provide very good support for students' learning through positive feedback and good guidance during the lesson to move their learning on. Although students' work is marked, the quality is variable because there are sometimes missed opportunities to let students know how well they are progressing towards their targets and how to

improve their work. There is a clear framework to record and track students' progress against National Curriculum levels and GCSE examination grade criteria. Good use of ICT was seen in lessons, where, for example, students were asked to use advanced features in databases to achieve higher GCSE grades in their coursework.

There has been a steady rise in GCSE results in recent years with more students reaching the higher GCSE grades in a broader range of subjects since the last inspection. However, too few students are reaching the higher levels in GCSE mathematics. There are no opportunities for students to take art or creative subjects at GCSE. The boarding provision contributes very well in extending the curriculum through, for example, opportunities to study for A-level ICT after school. All leavers move on to higher education or employment. Students make good progress in their A-level courses, particularly in Urdu.

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

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They remain totally focused on learning and are very attentive in lessons. Their outstanding behaviour in lessons and around the school has a very positive impact on their learning and progress and on their personal development. Older students have excellent relationships with younger ones as is seen in the mixed-age classes for the Islamic curriculum. The school develops the appreciation of students' own and other cultures very effectively through the Islamic studies course, citizenship, humanities and English, as well as through assemblies and regular visits to other schools. In a lesson on Arabic calligraphy, students were shown how English, Chinese and Farsi were written in comparison to Arabic. In an English lesson, they learned how the English language is derived from many other languages such as Latin, Greek and French by looking at suffixes, prefixes and words such as 'banquet'.

There is a very strong sense of community and personal responsibility with no recent exclusions nor incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Attendance is very good. Senior students develop excellent leadership skills through taking on responsibilities for key areas of the school. Self-discipline and mutual respect are at the heart of students' interactions with others. Older students are mature and well mannered, providing excellent role models for younger students to follow and adopt.

There is a zero tolerance in relation to bullying. The admission arrangements of the school, the recruitment procedures and the disciplinary processes are closely monitored to ensure there is no intolerance demonstrated to any particular group. The school's curriculum and spiritual development programmes emphasise inclusion and harmony between diverse groups. The good procedures for the induction of new students into boarding contribute positively to their personal development and well-being.

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

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Clear policies for safeguarding, child protection, safer recruitment, health and safety, anti-bullying, behaviour and discipline and first aid are in place. All staff are suitably trained at the required level in child protection, including the designated officer who maintains close links with the local safeguarding board.

Students' good health is effectively promoted through opportunities to participate in regular physical education lessons and in sports such as football and cricket and also by making healthy food choices. Good links with the PSHE curriculum promotes safety and an awareness of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. A small number of parents said that the school was not providing healthy lifestyles, although during the inspection, it was clear that students were making healthy choices about food. Students feel safe and keeping them safe is a high priority. Risk assessments are carried out as required. There are regular fire drills and testing of electrical appliances. The admissions and attendance registers are well kept.

The school fully complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended in producing a three-year plan to improve access.

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

All the required checks for staff, the trustees, for students over 18 years old and for regular visitors are recorded as required on the school's single central register. All the required checks on staff were made prior to their being appointed.

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

All classrooms are well lit, suitably ventilated and heated and in a satisfactory state of repair. There is adequate outside recreational space which includes a field and hard-surfaced areas for football and basketball as well as quieter seating areas. There are adequate washroom facilities for staff and students with appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill. The school benefits from a large spacious prayer hall and a smaller one for daily prayers. Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, the decoration in parts of the accommodation is becoming worn.

## **Provision of information**

The school meets all the regulations. All the required information is provided in the school's prospectus for parents and carers, prospective parents and carers and others. This includes the aims and ethos of the school, details of the Islamic and secular curriculum, and contact details of the headteacher and board of trustees. Parents and carers are also provided with other policies such as those on admissions discipline and exclusions. All parents are provided with half-yearly reports on their children's progress as well as details of the academic results of the school.

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

The school meets all the regulations. The written complaints procedure provides clear timescales for its informal, formal and appeals stages.

## **Effectiveness of the boarding provision**

The quality of boarding at Darul Uloom School is good. The management structure of the school effectively contributes to the protection and promotion of boarding students' welfare.

All the recommendations made at the last inspection relating to the general management of medication, the recording of accidents, greater consistency in the testing of fire detection systems, and improvement in the supervision and appraisal of staff with key responsibilities for boarders, have been addressed.

The arrangements for promoting the health and well-being of boarding pupils are good. Boarders have good access to community-based medical services and the school makes appropriate provision for pupils who fall ill. Clear procedures are followed for the management, secure storage and administration of medication. Members of staff receive training in the administering of first aid.

Boarders have a good, healthy and enjoyable diet which contributes towards their health and physical well-being. A weekly menu is in place and allows for an element of choice to be made at each mealtime. Boarders speak positively about the quality and quantity of food served.

Boarders say they feel safe at the school and are very supportive of each other. Effective complaints policies and procedures are in place, supported by systems that allow boarders to make constructive suggestions towards certain aspects of the boarding provision. For example, following a recent suggestion by a student, the school improved its laundry facilities.

Bullying is not an area of concern to boarders, with an effective anti-bullying policy and procedures in place. They show a lot of respect for each other, with a strong bond of comradeship apparent. Boarders also feel the disciplinary procedures adopted by the school are fair.

Members of staff receive appropriate levels of safeguarding training which is refreshed annually. They are aware of their own responsibilities which are underpinned by relevant safeguarding policies and reporting procedures. The school has a designated person with overall responsibility for safeguarding matters who provides guidance to all staff.

Comprehensive systems are in place to monitor, record, and prevent risks to health and safety at the school. Specific fire drills for boarders are taking place each term.

Employment of staff is in accordance with the relevant regulations and this confidential recruitment information is maintained securely.

The relationships among the boarders and their relationships with staff are excellent. The boarding provision creates a calm, well-ordered and self-disciplined environment, generating a pleasant, warm and convivial atmosphere.

The support received by boarders from staff is outstanding. There is a range of staff readily available to provide support and guidance to boarders at all times. They can also access advice or support through an independent listener or Childline.

The staffing levels during the day, night and at weekends are sufficient to meet the needs of the boarders. Contact with parents and friends is maintained through the use of mobile phones and by having access to the internet.

Most, but not all, sleeping accommodation has suitable furniture or storage facilities. The living accommodation, while poor in parts regarding the décor, furnishings and state of repair, is deemed to have just met with minimum standards. The school recognise this and has a refurbishment programme ongoing, with more planned. The security arrangements adopted by the school are good.

Equality and diversity sits comfortably alongside the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the school, which have been judged as outstanding. Boarding pupils confirm they are treated with fairness, understanding, respect and dignity by staff.

The school provides a statement of its boarding principles and practices for parents, boarders and staff. The organisation and management of the boarding houses creates a safe, non-discriminatory and extremely helpful environment for boarders to live in.

The school is well managed and organised. Appropriate policies, procedures and guidance for staff are in place. Little staff turnover means that boarders are looked after with consistency, by experienced staff.

The overall quality rating for the boarding aspects of the school is good.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

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

The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

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

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

- improve the quality of marking across the school so that students always know how well they are making progress in relation to their targets and how to improve their work
- provide more opportunities for students to undertake work experience.

### **Recommendations for boarding**

- Continue to improve the areas provided for boarders to ensure they are adequately maintained (NMS 40.1).
- Ensure all sleeping accommodation is suitably furnished and has appropriate storage facilities for boarders to store their clothing and property (NMS 42.10).

## 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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### The quality of boarding provision

Effectiveness of boarding provision		✓		
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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim secondary school		
<b>Date school opened</b>	October 1979		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11-19 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 342	Girls: 0	Total: 342
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of boarders</b>	Boys: 250	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£600		
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£1,600		
<b>Address of school</b>	Holcombe Hall Holcombe Bury Lancashire BL8 4NG		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 826106		
<b>Email address</b>	darulubom@ml1.net		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A R Limbada		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Board of Trustees, Darul Ubom		