

# Darul Uloom Al Arabiya Al Islamiya

Holcombe Hall, Holcombe, Bury, Lancashire BL8 4NG

**Inspection dates** 14–15 January 2016

**Overall outcome** **Unmet independent school standards identified**

## Reason for the inspection

- This inspection was carried out following a number of complaints received by the registration authority in relation to the school and to the quality of residential care. These complaints raised concerns about the levels of supervision both in the school and in the residential setting. They also raised concerns about the quality of the curriculum, suggesting that a 'narrow, Islamic focused' curriculum was in place. Further concerns were raised about provision of information for and communication with parents and a lack of activities for pupils to engage in during their leisure time.
- This inspection was conducted without notice to the school.
- The registration authority commissioned the inspection to report against parts 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8 of the independent school standards alongside the relevant national minimum standards for boarding schools.
- Inspectors conducted a number of tours of the school and residential quarters on both days of the inspection. They checked school policies relating to welfare, health and safety and risk assessments and looked at how these were acted upon. Inspectors assessed the quality of the premises, both in the school and in the residential setting, including pupils' bedrooms. Inspectors spoke to a large proportion of the pupils, during formal meetings and over meal and social times. They evaluated a range of school documentation relating to the safety of pupils, including the school's recruitment processes, admissions and registration registers, bullying, behaviour and sanctions records as well as any record of serious incidents. The lead inspector held a phone conversation with the local authority prior to the inspection. She held meetings with the headteacher and examined curriculum information. Care inspectors met with leaders responsible for this provision. Inspectors also met with a representative of the Board of Trustees.

## Main findings

- The vast majority of the concerns raised by the complainants were not substantiated at this inspection.
- The curriculum taught at the school balances Islamic education with a secular curriculum. Leaders have adjusted the timetable so that secular studies are conducted in the morning. This enables more time to be spent on the secular subjects. About 18 hours of dedicated secular study time takes place each week. Thus, a significant proportion of pupils' and learners' time at the school is spent on the secular curriculum. This includes lessons in mathematics, English, science, physical education (PE), information and communication technology, personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and Urdu.
- The curriculum aims include the promotion of fundamental British values, such as democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and

beliefs. Pupils have a deep understanding of these values and can reflect in detail how they are also underpinned by their Islamic faith. They have very positive views about their roles as British Muslims and demonstrate a high regard for the principle of equality in the light of British law. This includes a respect for others, including in relation to the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act 2010.

- However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their creative and aesthetic understanding and skills. While they have occasional opportunities to, for example, practise calligraphy and design posters in other lessons, this curriculum is not planned; consequently pupils are unable to make sufficient progress in these aspects of learning over their time at the school.
- The school provides a detailed citizenship and PSHE curriculum that actively promotes fundamental British values, and ensures that pupils develop their self-esteem and self-confidence. Pupils clearly articulate their views, for example on the equality of women and the rights of all people, regardless of sexuality, under British law. They have very strong opinions on Islamic extremism, underpinned by a detailed understanding and interpretation of Quranic teaching. For example, they identify 'Islamic State' terrorism as 'un-Islamic' and identify strongly with British sovereignty. The school ensures they are not subject to partisan political views and enables pupils to develop a detailed ideological rebuttal of radical Islamist viewpoints.
- Students increasingly accept responsibilities within the local and wider community. This is particularly the case for older learners. Pupils visit the local primary school to contribute to assemblies and a number of schools regularly bring their pupils to Darul Uloom to learn about Islam, in organised activities led by the pupils from Darul Uloom. Pupils raise money for local charities and older pupils have voluntarily helped local residents during the recent floods. Learners volunteer at local scout groups. Further afield, some learners have established voluntary groups within their home towns, for example in supporting drugs outreach work.
- The arrangements made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school are not adequate because the school's health and safety policy and risk assessments are not detailed enough. Leaders do not identify all the risks associated with the school site and premises, and aspects of maintenance to the grounds and the building need improving to ensure the safety of pupils at all times.
- Significant improvements have been made to the kitchen since the last inspection. The kitchen and dining areas were found to be clean and tidy. Progress has also been made to improve standards of boarding areas since the last welfare inspection. For example, bedrooms for pupils who are under 16 have all been re-plastered and painted, with new ventilation, blinds at windows and some new bedroom furniture, beds and mattresses. All bedrooms and common living areas were warm. Bathrooms were clean with sufficient hot water for showering. It was confirmed by pupils that this is always the case.
- Pupils are well supervised at all times in the school and boarding provision. The staff duty rota is on display in the residential building and also in the school. This includes named staff in place on evenings, overnight and weekends, including their direct contact details. Pupils clearly know who is on duty and when. Year 7 pupils speak eloquently about trusting staff who are kind and supportive. They say bullying is not an issue and believe they are well looked after with multiple opportunities for activities during unstructured hours.

### **Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools**

#### **The school must take action to meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and associated requirements**

- The proprietor must ensure a full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education (paragraph 2(1) and 2(2)(a)).

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school (paragraph 7 and 7(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school and such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (paragraph 8, 8(a) and 8(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a) and 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
- The proprietor should ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34 (1)(b) and 34(1)(c)).

### **The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools**

- The proprietor should ensure that the school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured (NMS 6.2)

## Inspection team

Philippa Darley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Graham Robinson	Social Care Inspector
Paul Gillespie	Social Care Inspector

## Information about this school

- Darul Uloom is an independent residential educational institute for Muslim boys set in a rural location within a few miles of Bury town centre.
- The school is registered for pupils and learners in the age range 11 to 23 years. There are currently 364 pupils on roll, 66 of whom are in the sixth form. Over half of these pupils, 234, also board at the school.
- The school offers a secondary secular and further education as well as advanced Islamic education to Islamic scholar (alim) standard.
- The school aims to 'promote the welfare of young Muslims and to give students a practical and more successful understanding of their religious and social rights and responsibilities in society', and to 'allow students to develop their spiritual and moral individuality so that they become true models of Islam, as well as respecting the individuality of others and other cultures and faiths.'
- The school was previously inspected on 4–6 November 2014 and was judged to be 'outstanding' in all areas. A separate welfare-only inspection was conducted on 29 October 2013; this judged the overall effectiveness of this provision to be 'good', although the quality of boarding provision and care was deemed to be 'adequate'.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105372
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC008476
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008368
<b>DfE registration number</b>	351/6007

This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim secondary school
<b>School status</b>	Independent boarding school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–23
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Boys
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	364
<b>Of which, number of pupils in the sixth form</b>	66
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Number of boarders on roll</b>	234
<b>Proprietor</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Chair</b>	Mr H H Patel
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mohammed Atcha
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–6 November 2014
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£900
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£2000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 826106
<b>Fax number</b>	01706 827907
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:darululoom@ml1.net">darululoom@ml1.net</a>

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