

Darul Uloom Al Arabiya Al Islamiya

Holcombe Hall, Holcombe Old Road, Holcombe, Nr. Bury, Lancashire BL8 4NG

Inspection date

23 November 2016

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Residential provision outcome

The school meets all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–

2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and

2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–

2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and

2(1)(b)(ii) do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

2(2)(a) full-time supervised education [is provided] 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;

- The last inspection established that pupils had too few opportunities to develop their creative and aesthetic understanding and skills. While they had occasional opportunities to, for example, practise calligraphy skills and design posters, the curriculum was not planned. Consequently, pupils were unable to make sufficient progress in creative and aesthetic aspects of learning over their time at the school.
- Leaders and managers have introduced an art course for pupils in years 7 to 9. Each class now spends a lesson per week developing basic drawing skills. Pupils in Year 7 spend much of this time learning how to draw using formal drawing techniques such as perspective and shading. Year 9 pupils use these skills to enable them to attempt more challenging free-hand drawing.

- Teachers frequently seek opportunities to reinforce British values through their work. This was recently achieved successfully when, through drawing, pupils were asked to represent similarities between British and Islamic culture. Much of their art focused on tolerance, respect and harmony.
- The introduction of aesthetics education has been more measured at key stage 4 because these pupils have not had the opportunity to build sufficient skills through key stage 3. Despite this, however, the school has taken effective steps to improve its creative and aesthetic provision. The most significant area of improvement at key stage 4 has been through the planned development of pupils' vocal, presentational and linguistic skills. Pupils are now taught how to develop their Qiraat, Tajweed and Nasheed. These are forms of melodic recital and singing. Pupils create their own interpretations. Teachers monitor the improvement in pupils' skills; last year ended with a highly successful school-wide competition during which pupils demonstrated their talents.
- The school now meets all requirements within part 1 of the independent school standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–

7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and

7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act¹ applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–

8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and

8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.

11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.

16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–

16(a) 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

16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

¹ Section 87(1) was amended by section 105 of the Care Standards Act 2000 (c.41) and section 1A was inserted by section 43 of the 2011 Act.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures 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.

National Minimum Standard for Boarding Schools 6 – Safety of boarders

6.2 The school premises, 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.

- At the last inspection, provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety was inadequate in both the school and boarding settings. The school's health and safety policy and risk assessments were not detailed enough. Leaders did not identify all the risks associated with the school site and premises, and aspects of maintenance to the grounds and the building needed improving.
- The school reacted positively and quickly to the failures identified at the previous inspection.
- Within a few weeks of the last inspection, school leaders appointed a specialist independent health and safety consultant. The leadership team's attitude to all aspects of health and safety improved. With the guidance of the consultant, leaders were able to appreciate the value of a systematic approach to identifying risks and responding to them.
- Initially work concentrated on making the campus safe. Work included the extension of closed circuit television, improvement to external lighting and the provision of more security locks. In addition, hazards such as broken fencing, debris in the grounds and areas of danger due to uneven ground were addressed. Dangerous objects have been removed and new safety fencing has been installed.
- Good-quality health & safety and risk assessment policies have been introduced. These enable a systematic approach to managing the premises, and promoting pupils' health, welfare and safety. Leaders and managers have learned quickly and can now evaluate the level of risk presented by an activity, by equipment or by school facilities and buildings. A much higher priority is now given to quickly eliminating or reducing risks. Good routines have been established for evaluating risk, and these include weekly and monthly checks.
- Improvements made to the boarding areas include a full refurbishment of the bedrooms for pupils in key stages 3 and 4, the creation of a new shower block, refurbishment of toilets and improved flooring and decor in corridors. New equipment has been installed in the kitchenettes used by boarding pupils in the evenings.
- The main school kitchen has been completely refurbished. Classrooms are generally bright. Lighting is adequate in the wide corridors and stairways are safe. Risk is assessed before pupils take part in practical activities including in science and physical education. Educational visits are well prepared and include comprehensive risk assessments.
- The school has ensured that electrical equipment is regularly tested and conforms with requirements. Leaders and managers are currently evaluating, with support from their consultant, the efficiency and safety of whole-school evacuations.

- An example of particularly strong practice is the school's approach to assessing the risk posed by visitors to the school. Leaders recognise that people may wish to visit the school for a wide variety of reasons, including as guest speakers. In these cases, potential speakers are vetted rigorously. Speakers are expected to represent a well-known organisation or charity with firmly established views that are consistent with the school's ethos. The profiles of potential visiting speakers are investigated through an internet search. These visitors are accompanied at all times. Any requests to distribute literature or display posters have to be authorised by the school's senior leadership team; these requests are very rare.
- The school's approach to safeguarding children continues to be rigorous. Staff training covers a wide variety of potential threats to children. Training is frequent and up to date. The school works with a variety of external agencies that have an interest in child protection, including the police and local authority. The school has a good safeguarding and child protection policy. It complies with requirements. The school does not have a website where parents can get a copy of the school's child protection policy. However, when parents visit the school for the first time, they are given a standard pack of information and told they can request other documents, including the school's child protection policy.
- The school's approach to ensuring that pupils are protected from online threats is rigorous. Access to the internet through school systems is monitored and an extensive number of sites are filtered. Pupils under the age of 18 are not allowed to have telephones in school that enable them to gain access to the internet. This prevents pupils' access to unsuitable sites through their own, unfiltered, equipment.
- The school has made considerable progress in the time between inspection visits and there are plans in place to continue with a rolling programme of refurbishment throughout the whole of the boarding area and school.
- The school now meets all requirements within parts 3 and 5 of the independent school standards and part 6 of the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–

34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;

34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and

34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

34(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) 'well-being' means well-being within the meaning of section 10(2) of the Children Act 2004².

- Leaders and managers of the school reacted quickly and positively to weaknesses identified at the last inspection. They aspire to provide a high-quality education to their

² 2004 c.31.

pupils in a safe environment.

- The school engaged two consultants. They have helped the school to improve aspects of health and safety, leadership and management, education and the curriculum.
- Leaders and managers have responded to advice and made considerable improvements in a short period of time.
- The school now meets all independent school standards and all national minimum standards for boarding schools.
- After the last inspection, leaders and managers presented an action plan in response to the identified unmet standards. At that stage, the action plan was judged to require improvement. The criteria the school had identified with which it would measure success were not sufficiently precise. The plan did not contain all aspects identified by the inspection team as in need of improvement.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
 - 2(1)(b)(ii) do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education [is provided] 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;
- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act³ applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
 - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.

³ Section 87(1) was amended by section 105 of the Care Standards Act 2000 (c.41) and section 1A was inserted by section 43 of the 2011 Act.

- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
- 16(a) 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
- 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures 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.
- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
- 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
- 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.
- 34(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(c) 'well-being' means well-being within the meaning of section 10(2) of the Children Act 2004⁴.

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for residential special schools

- 6.2 The school premises, 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. (NMS 6.2)

⁴ 2004 c.31.

School details

Unique reference number	105372
Social care unique reference number	SC008476
DfE registration number	351/6007
Inspection number	10022960

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

The inspection of residential 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 residential special schools.

Type of school	Muslim secondary school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 23
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	62
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	215
Proprietor	Board of Trustees
Chair	Mr H H Patel
Headteacher	Mr Mohammed Atcha
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£2,100
Telephone number	01706 826106
Email address	darululoom@ml1.net
Date of previous standard inspection	4 November 2014

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, 62 of whom are in the sixth form. Two hundred and fifteen of these pupils 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 14 January 2016. That emergency, no notice, 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. The vast majority of the concerns raised by the complainants were not substantiated. However, during that visit, some independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools were judged to be unmet. A previous full inspection conducted on 4 November 2014 judged all aspects to be outstanding.
- The school uses no alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not meet at its previous inspection.
- This inspection was conducted without notice. It was the first to monitor the progress the school had made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that were judged to be non-compliant at its previous inspection. The inspection focused mainly on aspects of pupils' welfare, health and safety, safeguarding and curriculum.
- Inspectors gathered a wide range of evidence during the inspection, including through observations of pupils working in classrooms and pupils' workbooks.
- Meetings were held with the school senior leaders, including the headteacher and the chair of the board of trustees. A meeting was held with the school's health and safety consultant.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally.
- Inspectors scrutinised documents and records concerning safeguarding, health and safety and the curriculum.
- Inspectors visited boarding provision, school grounds and classrooms.
- Inspectors listened to the winners of last year's Nasheed competition.
- The Department for Education rejected the school's action plan submitted in response to unmet standards identified during the emergency inspection conducted in January 2016.

Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Graham Robinson

Social Care Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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