

Darul Uloom Al Arabiya Al Islamiya

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

Inspection dates

13–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are sustaining improvements in provision. They have secured good teaching and outcomes in the main school, excellent sixth-form provision and outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- The school provides a harmonious and peaceful environment where pupils learn successfully, feel safe and develop excellent personal skills.
- Teaching is good and pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Pupils concentrate in lessons and are courteous and considerate around the school.
- The school's work to promote pupils' understanding of British values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils show respect for people from different faiths and cultures.
- Pupils attain high standards at GCSE, as a result of effective curriculum planning, good teaching and their excellent attitudes to learning.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and effective teaching and assessment skills. Pupils consequently make good progress over time in secular subjects. They make excellent progress in Islamic studies.
- Pupils who fall behind in their learning are supported to catch up quickly. The most able pupils make good progress over time, but work is not always challenging enough to deepen their learning in all subjects in Years 7 and 8.
- The new system to track pupils' progress is fit for purpose, but does not track pupils' progress entirely accurately in all subjects.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make an excellent contribution to the school and achieve high grades in examinations.
- Pupils' academic achievements, their excellent personal skills and the school's highly effective careers education prepare pupils well for their futures and life in modern Britain.
- Leadership requires improvement because the school does not currently comply fully with the conditions of its registration.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'). However, the school is not compliant with the conditions of registration, as a small number of students are above the current higher age limit of 23.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve teaching and learning, so that pupils' progress is consistently outstanding in all year groups by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils in Years 7 and 8 are provided with sufficiently challenging work that builds on their attainment at key stage 2 and deepens their learning
 - making sure pupils in Years 7 and 8 write in greater depth across the curriculum and develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Hone the system to track pupils' progress in order to more accurately assess their progress against the standards expected for their age in each year group and subject.
- Ensure that the school complies fully with the conditions of its registration.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the school is currently operating outside its registration conditions. A small number of learners are over the maximum age of 23 years. These learners are completing advanced Islamic studies, which take up to six years to conclude.
- Since the emergency inspection in January 2016, leadership has been enhanced with the engagement of external specialists in health and safety, education and safeguarding, and reorganisation of roles within school. The school received a progress monitoring inspection in November 2016. The independent school standards that were not met at the January 2016 emergency inspection were found to be met at this inspection. All other independent school standards are met.
- Leaders and trustees have sustained a culture of ambition and high expectations. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that require further development. Leadership is securing good teaching and outcomes in the main school, excellent sixth-form provision and outstanding personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Pupils rise to the high expectations of staff and contribute positively to the peaceful and harmonious atmosphere that characterises the school. Pupils value the 'family atmosphere' and speak of the 'lifelong friends' they make during their time at the school.
- Leaders and teachers are highly motivated and committed to their work. Leaders check teaching and learning carefully, and manage the performance of teachers effectively. Staff are keen to share good practice and attend training to improve their teaching. Subject leaders regularly attend network meetings with subject specialists from other schools. Many teachers graduated from the school and have chosen to return as staff, because of their positive experiences.
- Leaders have introduced a new system to track pupils' progress from their starting points, and this is fit for purpose. The system is not sufficiently honed to track pupils' progress precisely in all subjects against the standards expected for their age in each year group. However, the foundations are in place to track pupils' progress accurately.
- The curriculum is planned effectively to provide pupils with a range of experiences. Islamic studies are interwoven with the national curriculum, providing pupils with a range of knowledge and transferable skills. Pupils attain high standards at GCSE and at A level. They are well informed of choices available and very well prepared for their next steps at the end of their time in the school or in the sixth form.
- Alongside Islamic studies and GCSE subjects, pupils enjoy a range of activities which broaden their learning, including in physical education (PE), technology, citizenship and the arts. Their observational drawings are accurate and skilled, and their artwork and designs show creativity and imagination.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength in the school's provision. Islamic values are at the core of teaching, and pupils demonstrate them in their relationships. They are sincere, tolerant and considerate. Pupils visit local schools and invite children from different faiths and cultures into their school, in order to

learn about each other's experiences and faith. Leaders ensure that pupils gain a balanced understanding of global issues and topical news through discussion in lessons.

- Pupils are taught about protected characteristics and show respect for people regardless of age, disability, gender or sexual orientation. The school's equality policy meets requirements. Discrimination is tackled robustly.
- British values are promoted in subjects across the curriculum and integrated into the daily work of the school. For example, pupils learn about democracy in history and citizenship and apply the principles in the election of school councillors. They learn about the importance of the rule of law, respect and individual liberty, and put such values into practice in their daily interactions in school.
- Additional activities, such as visits to museums and places of worship, outdoor activities, and voluntary work within the local community and for charity, add to pupils' understanding of modern Britain.
- Leaders work effectively with a range of partners. For example, officers from Greater Manchester Police are invited into school and regularly work with pupils to contribute to their understanding of how to keep safe. Staff attend training provided by the local authority and examination boards to ensure that they keep up to date with safeguarding and curriculum changes.
- Engagement with parents and carers is positive. All parents who made their views known were positive about their son's education and well-being. Typical comments were 'a very beneficial school for boys who want to achieve goodness in their life' and 'my son has flourished academically, spiritually and personally'. Parents are entirely confident in leaders and teachers to teach and nurture their sons. Inspection findings corroborate their views.

Governance

- Governance is provided through a trust board with five members.
- Trustees have relevant knowledge and skills to support and challenge school leaders successfully. They are actively involved in the work of the school and speak with pupils regularly. Consequently, they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They track pupils' progress and manage the performance of school leaders effectively.
- Trustees have a clear vision to continue to develop the school and ensure that it works to high standards.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and take account of the most recent government guidance. The school does not have a website, but it provides policies to parents on their child's induction and on request.
- All staff are vigilant in ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils and students. They know what to do and which outside agencies to contact if they have any concerns. The external consultant has been instrumental in ensuring that all standards are met and

safeguarding procedures are rigorous.

- Staff and volunteers have been subject to the relevant disclosure and barring service and other checks. All staff have completed training appropriate to their role and receive regular updates. Named staff are appropriately trained to a higher level in health and safety, safeguarding, first aid and fire prevention. Older learners in school have completed safeguarding training alongside staff, so that they are alert to any risk or signs that cause concern.
- Staff engage with other professionals to do all they can to safeguard pupils. For example, strong links with Greater Manchester Police support leaders in ensuring that the 'Prevent' duty is implemented fully and that pupils are aware of risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of such risks and how to keep themselves and others safe. Police officers who spoke with inspectors expressed confidence in the school's procedures to protect pupils from radicalisation and associated risks.
- The school buildings and premises are safe and secure. Significant improvements have been made, so standards that were unmet at the time of the last inspection are now met.
- Leaders engage successfully with parents and stakeholders to make sure that all pupils are supported and safe. Parents who made their views known are confident in the school's approach, commenting that, for example, 'children are happy, safe and well mannered' and 'teachers are concerned for every child'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and effective teaching skills. Secular subjects are taught every morning by knowledgeable staff. The wide range of subjects support pupils to gain relevant qualifications and develop a range of skills that support their future learning.
- Islamic studies are taught very effectively, so pupils develop a deep knowledge of the Qur'an and understanding of the five pillars of Islam. Pupils also develop skills that support learning in a range of contexts, for example linguistic and presentation skills.
- Constructive, good-humoured relationships ensure that pupils' learning progresses at a good pace. Teachers are encouraging, and pupils are respectful and responsive. Pupils are comfortable to give their views, ask questions and request support from teachers.
- Teachers typically use probing questions to extend pupils' learning and explain new learning clearly. Occasionally, however, the questioning and discussion do not encourage pupils to think deeply for themselves.
- Teaching is enhanced with good-quality resources. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively in the teaching of secular subjects. Text books are often used to guide teaching, and leaders ensure that these are up to date. Teachers generally adapt and use resources effectively.
- There are times, however, when the learning of the most able pupils in Years 7 and 8 is limited. Some tasks provided for pupils to complete are not sufficiently challenging to deepen their learning. Pupils' mathematical work and writing, across the curriculum, are not always at the depth of which they are capable, given their prior attainment at key

stage 2. In mathematics, teachers insufficiently develop pupils' reasoning skills.

- As pupils get older, they are increasingly inspired to deepen their own learning through peer discussion, reading and research. Pupils' computing, literacy and mathematical skills are developed well across the curriculum, giving them the key skills they need to pursue their own learning. Pupils read fluently, access books from the school library and use the school computers, under supervision, in their own time.
- Pupils who need additional help to keep up are supported very effectively through personalised tuition, in addition to the class teaching. Pupils readily ask for help when they need it and, as a result, make good gains in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- During their time at the school, pupils develop excellent attitudes and apply themselves diligently to learning. Their self-confidence, self-esteem and communication skills are developed exceptionally well, in public-speaking classes, personal tuition, lessons and assemblies.
- Pupils' safety and well-being is the guiding principle in all of the school's work. Pupils develop into confident, capable and thoughtful young men as a result of adults' encouragement and care. Their physical and mental health are of utmost importance.
- Staff ensure that pupils are safe in school, and pupils say that they feel extremely safe. They say, for example, that school 'feels like home and we are in one big family'. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, and they are positive that there is not any bullying in the school. If they were to have concerns, they know that they can turn to teachers for support.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in wider society. They know about risks associated with social media and extremist views, and how to manage them. They are very well informed about how to sustain a healthy diet and lifestyle.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and about equality and diversity in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship lessons. They show understanding and respect for differences between people, for example in terms of their sexuality, culture, faith and points of view.
- Pupils are supported to develop highly effective leadership skills, for example through the school council, work in the local community and as mentors and tutors for younger pupils. Suggestions to improve the school are welcomed through class representatives on the school council. Leaders have responded positively to pupils' requests, widening the choice of food and library books, for example.
- Excellent careers education, advice and information ensure that pupils are well informed about possible future choices. Leaders draw on a variety of impartial expertise and invite professionals in to talk about various university courses and careers. Pupils express a range of career aspirations and are supported well to achieve them. Ex-pupils have gone on to varied careers, for example in medicine, education, law, social care and the police.

- Parents who made their views known are highly positive about their sons' personal development, stating, for example: 'My son has grown in confidence. Teachers have talked to him about different career paths and inspired him to become a secondary school teacher.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' impeccable behaviour and their high levels of motivation make excellent contributions to their progress. Pupils are punctual at their lessons, well organised and ready to learn. They listen attentively, concentrate on their work and want to do well.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is exemplary. They are polite, respectful and considerate. The school is calm and peaceful, providing an excellent atmosphere in which to grow and learn.
- Pupils rarely miss a day of school. Their attendance is well above average, reflecting their enjoyment and drive for learning. Ex-pupils often return to support the work of the school or visit their teachers.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils who are currently in the school make good progress from their various starting points. The majority of pupils met or exceeded expected standards in key stage 2 assessments. The school's entrance examination establishes that pupils are ready to learn within the school's curriculum. Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards at GCSE, including in English and mathematics, and in their Islamic studies.
- Pupils' progress quickens as they move through the school. In Years 7 and 8, pupils' progress is good, but not outstanding, because some of the work is not challenging enough to deepen their learning, given their prior attainment. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. Pupils' progress quickens in Years 9, 10 and 11. Pupils who have lower starting points catch up quickly because they are given effective personalised support and tuition.
- For the last three years, pupils' attainment at GCSE has been above average. In 2017, almost all pupils gained a good pass in five GCSEs, including English and mathematics, and an above-average proportion attained higher grades, including in triple sciences. Pupils' attainment dipped in geography, bringing down pupils' attainment in English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualifications overall. However, leaders have taken appropriate action to support pupils to attain better grades in the EBacc this year.
- Pupils make excellent progress in their Islamic studies, developing a deep knowledge and understanding of Islam. Their studies also develop skills that support learning in other subjects. For example, their study of Urdu and Arabic develops their language skills. Qiraat, Tajweed and Nasheed (melodic recital and singing) develop pupils' confidence in public speaking and support their aesthetic development.
- Pupils gain knowledge and skills across the broad curriculum. In science, for example, they hypothesise and experiment confidently. In art, they learn different techniques and apply them creatively. Pupils develop their physical skills in PE, and their speaking and listening skills in PSHE and citizenship. Their literacy, computing and mathematical skills

are developed effectively in focused lessons and across the curriculum.

- Pupils read widely for different purposes. This supports their learning very effectively. They enjoy novels and read a range of texts to support their learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their learning. Their good progress, excellent personal development and highly effective careers education prepare them well for the next stage in their education or employment. Many pupils stay on in the school's sixth form, but of those who leave at the end of Year 11, virtually all go into sustained further education or apprenticeships.

Sixth form provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. Leaders ensure that students have wide-ranging experiences, achieve highly and are very well prepared for their next steps.
- Students have access to a broad curriculum that is personalised to meet their needs and aspirations successfully. Teaching builds on the Islamic study of key stages 3 and 4, and students are also offered a range of A-level courses, including Urdu, Arabic, English, mathematics, law, sciences and accounting. The BTEC computing course helps students to build on their computing skills, and those who need to are supported to retake English or mathematics GCSE successfully. Students are also supported to study Open University short courses according to their career aspirations. Consequently, retention in the sixth form is consistently 100%.
- The curriculum is enriched with sports, visits and a strong focus on British values and citizenship. Students have a good understanding of the diversity within society. They are respectful of difference and prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Students are excellent role models for younger pupils. Their attendance is high. They are respectful and polite and make a positive contribution to the school, for example as mentors, tutors and prefects. Students feel safe in the school and contribute to ensuring that younger pupils feel safe. Younger pupils say that they find sixth formers reassuring, supportive and inspiring.
- Students' personal development is a high priority. They receive Naseehah (advice), which enables them to discuss any concerns and enriches their spiritual and personal development. They develop excellent study skills and are highly motivated to continue their studies in their own time.
- Teaching and assessment support learning effectively. Regular assessments ensure that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their grades. In combination with students' drive to deepen their learning, teaching results in consistently high achievement in examinations. Students typically make excellent progress from their starting points when they enter the sixth form and attain high grades in a range of A levels.
- Achievement in Islamic theology, Aalim (Islamic scholarship) and the school's Hafiz (memorisation of the Qur'an) programme is excellent. Many students graduate as Aalim or Hafiz.
- Students receive excellent independent careers advice through links with universities, career advisers, visitors and ex-pupils, who have followed varied career paths. Work-

experience placements are planned carefully to provide a range of experiences, including, for example, in pharmacy, law, care and health services. Students' sustained engagement in education, employment or training is typically high when they leave the sixth form. They go on to higher education and varied careers, for example as doctors, lawyers, social workers and teachers. Many stay in school past the age of 18 to continue with Islamic studies to degree level.

School details

Unique reference number	105372
DfE registration number	351/6007
Inspection number	10038832

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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	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	317
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	77
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Mr H H Patel (Trustee)
Chair	Mr H H Patel
Headteacher	Mr Mohammed Atcha
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,100
Telephone number	01706 826 106
Website	The school does not have a website
Email address	darululoom@ml1.net
Date of previous inspection	14 January 2016

Information about this school

- Darul Uloom is an independent residential educational institution for Muslim boys set in a rural location within a few miles of Bury town centre.
- The school is registered for pupils and students in the age range 11 to 23 years. There are currently 317 pupils on roll, 77 of whom are in the sixth form. Two hundred of these pupils also board at the school. One hundred and one students are over the age of 19,

and are completing advanced Islamic studies. The provision and outcomes for this group were not within the remit for this inspection.

- 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 received a full inspection on 4 November 2014, at which all aspects of the school's work were judged outstanding. In January 2016, an 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. The school received a no-notice, progress monitoring inspection, on 23 November 2016, to check the progress of its work towards meeting the identified unmet standards.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice. It was an inspection of the education provision only, and did not include inspection of boarding provision or education provision for learners over the age of 19, who are completing Islamic studies.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each year group and the sixth form. Some observations were conducted jointly with school leaders. They looked at work in lessons and carried out a detailed work scrutiny of a random sample of work from pupils in Years 7, 9 and 11 and the sixth form.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and students from the sixth form about their work and life in school, in lessons and in several meetings. They observed assemblies and pupils' behaviour around the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with a trustee, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers, external consultants, Greater Manchester police officers, a headteacher from a local school and parents.
- School documents were examined, including school policies, safeguarding procedures, the school's prospectus, records of external consultants' work and leaders' monitoring and evaluation. Records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also checked.
- Inspectors took account of 65 responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, and 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mavis Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Ahmed Marikar	Her Majesty's Inspector

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