

Darul Uloom, London

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	305/6077
Unique Reference Number	101695
Inspection number	320346
Inspection dates	5-6 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Darul Uloom, London is an Islamic boarding school that opened in the suburb of Chislehurst in Kent in 1994. The school admits boys aged from 13 to 19. There are 152 students on roll, of whom 148 are boarders and four attend as day students. The school aims to help young Muslim men enter religious life and the wider community with attitudes and values that reflect their faith. Great importance is placed on knowledge of the Qur'an and living by its principles of peaceful conduct and disciplined living. It was last inspected by Ofsted in August 2002, and by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in November 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Darul Uloom, London, is a good school. Its Islamic Studies programme is organised effectively and reflects good quality teaching; as a result, students make good progress and gain a very detailed understanding of the Qur'an and its implications for daily living and their role as future religious leaders. Secular study is satisfactory; there is good teaching and progress at times, but some areas of the curriculum are under-represented. Students' personal development is good and their behaviour outstanding, stemming from the good, secure, caring environment provided by the school and its consistency in promoting responsible attitudes. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and meets all but one of the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Provision for Islamic studies is good, with some aspects outstanding. National Curriculum provision has strengths but also some areas which lack sufficient breadth. The Islamic curriculum is taught in the morning and subjects from the National Curriculum in the afternoon.

The quality of the Islamic studies' curriculum (*Ders-e-Nezam*) is good. It is a six-year programme of Islamic theology to achieve the status of *alim* (scholar). Provision is well resourced and it enables students to make good progress in all areas of Islamic theology. The programme is offered in mixed-age groups, which meets the needs of the students. Class time is managed wisely. The overall programme is broad and balanced and includes Qur'anic recitation (tajweed), memorisation (tahfeez) and Qura'nic translation and interpretation (tfseer). The school also offers the traditions of the prophet (hadith) and Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) as well as several other specialisms, such as beliefs (aqeeda), Islamic history, Islamic manners,

life of the Prophet Muhammad (seera), Arabic language, syntax (nahwa), morphology (saraf) and Arabic literature. Urdu is also taught as a modern foreign language.

The secular curriculum is satisfactory. Much of it is good, for instance, the programmes of study in mathematics and science, but there are significant omissions, notably a lack of diversity in the humanities with only religious education (RE) offered. Arts subjects are also absent. Careers education is sound and is incorporated into personal, social and health education (PSHE), and linked to the school's central aim of educating religious leaders. For older students there is adequate scope for them to gain work experience in mosques, make links with businesses and take on responsibilities for supervising younger students.

The quality of teaching and assessment overall is good. Teaching in Islamic studies is good. Teachers are well qualified and have very good subject knowledge. Some memorisation and recitation lessons are outstanding because the teacher is especially astute at listening to students and suggesting ways in which to rapidly improve their performance. Each area has well-designed teaching activities to help students enjoy their learning and make good progress. Teachers' relationships with students are very good. There is trust and respect. Students are praised and encouraged to improve and take on responsibilities which build up their self-confidence, for instance by conducting services and delivering speeches. Continuous assessment ensures that teachers are informed about students' needs and their prior attainments. As a result, the correct level of work is set, ensuring good progress. Homework is set regularly to reinforce effective learning.

Teaching of the National Curriculum and other secular subjects is satisfactory. Some lessons in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are effective and good teaching leads to very good results in Arabic. In RE and English the impact of teaching has been to produce satisfactory results. Students frequently come from backgrounds where English is underused. They find it hard to develop the sophisticated mastery of language needed to gain the highest grades in examinations where demanding, extensive answers are required. The curriculum provides limited additional support. The teaching of English involves students more actively than in other subjects but it does not provide consistent opportunities for students to read aloud and refine their grasp of the language. The school does not have a comprehensive system for tracking the academic progress of year groups.

Students make good overall progress. The effective teaching is enhanced by students' impressive commitment to learning. Together these factors ensure that they make the most of the opportunities provided. Their command of Islamic studies exceeds expectations. Their performance at GCSE is well above average and reflects success in building on slightly above average standards on entry to the school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is good with some aspects outstanding. The strong and explicit Islamic ethos succeeds in leading students to acquire a set of values, principles and beliefs that positively shape their prospects and their behaviour. They acquire a particularly clear knowledge of right and wrong through their religious studies programme. Regular prayer sessions are positively reflected in students' moral behaviour and attitudes. The teachers provide very good role models. Students show great respect for their teachers and for one another. They greet and interact with each other appropriately. They are well aware of social norms and correct conduct in all situations. Their attendance is good and their behaviour is outstanding. This has a major impact on the rapid progress they make in lessons and in the strong sense of safety all enjoy. They are confident and show real interest in their learning and their future economic well-being. Their awareness of other religious beliefs is good but they have a more limited understanding of the daily lives and traditions of other ethnic groups in the United Kingdom (UK) and of public institutions and services in England. Students develop a good sense of tolerance towards others. Students enjoy taking opportunities to serve the school and wider community, especially through leading prayers and preaching, but also through helping supervise younger students.

Welfare, health and safety of the students

Provision for students' welfare, health and safety is good. Students are completely consistent in seeing school as a safe and enjoyable place to be. While they have some scope for being heard, some would like a more structured way of expressing opinions or sharing ideas. The level of mutual respect between students and staff ensures harmonious relationships. It allows staff to give guidance to individuals and provide opportunities for them to develop responsibility and leadership. All safeguarding regulations are met and appropriate risk assessments are conducted and acted upon. Fire safety is effective and the local fire authority confirms the school's assessment. Bullying is extremely rare and, when asked, no students had experienced it. Behaviour policy is shaped by Qur'anic teaching with ready praise for good behaviour and clear, detailed guidelines for respectful conduct. Staff implement and demonstrate required practice with great consistency. Healthy eating is facilitated by the good quality of school food, which all students take for every meal. Friday afternoon sport adds to this. Personal safety is promoted well within PSHE teaching. The school fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of staff is checked carefully. A single central register is maintained and all statutory requirements are met.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is situated in a suburban area with extensive playing fields. Buildings are maintained well, and are kept tidy and clean. The school's teaching area is newly built and boarding accommodation is more than adequate. There are sufficient washing facilities for pupils and staff and a suitable medical room is located on the ground floor. All teaching areas are decorated well and are large in relation to class sizes. There is newly built, large prayer hall. A library, a large ICT room and a science laboratory are also part of the teaching area. There are good grassed and paved play areas and an indoor hall for students to use for sport and recreation. Accommodation meets statutory requirements and ensures safe and effective learning. It was inspected by the CSCI in November 2006, whose report indicates that all boarding standards were met by the school.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

Information of all kinds for parents, carers and others is comprehensive. Parents and carers are kept well informed about students' progress. Annual reports are supplemented by frequent direct contact between home and school, and together these provide good, up to date and accurate information about students' academic progress and personal development.

Procedures for handling complaints

The prospectus contains full details about complaints procedures and all parents and carers receive a copy. The procedure meets regulations. No complaints have occurred during the last 12 months.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:

- provide a wider range of curricular experiences in the humanities and arts for students (paragraph 1(2)(a)(ii)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- establish a comprehensive system for tracking the academic progress of year groups from entering to leaving the school which incorporates the pursuit of challenging targets
- increase the amount of reading and writing in English undertaken by students, both in English lessons and across the rest of the curriculum
- extend students' awareness of other ethnic communities in the UK and of public institutions and services in England.

School details

Name of school	Darul Uloom, London		
DCSF number	305/6077		
Unique reference number	101695		
Type of school	Islamic faith boys boarding school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1 November 1994		
Age range of pupils	12-19		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 152	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of boarders	Boys: 148	Girls: 0	Total: 148
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,200		
Annual fees (boarders)	£2,100		
Address of school	Foxbury Avenue Chislehurst Kent BR7 6SD		
Telephone number	0208 295 0637		
Fax number	0208 295 0655		
Email address	info@darululoomlondon.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr Mustafa Musa		
Proprietor	Trustees of Darul Uloom		
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew		
Dates of inspection	5-6 March 2008		