

Darul Uloom Leicester

Inspection report for boarding school

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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Darul Uloom (House of Knowledge) is an Islamic Boarding School in Leicester, providing a religious and secular education for boys and young men from 11 to about 23 years of age. It began operations in 1994 and is registered with the Department for Children, Schools and Families. There are currently 125 students, of whom 54 board, and 42 are under 18. The school is a registered charity and is operated by a board of Trustees. The school year operates between the major Islamic festivals of Ramadan and Eid-Il-Fitr and boarders return home every six weeks for a break.

Summary

This is the first full announced inspection of this Islamic boarding school for boys since 2005. A monitoring inspection took place on 11th March 2008, during the closure of the school due to an outbreak of scabies. This inspection looked at all the key national minimum standards in being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and organisation. Inspectors also covered standards in economic wellbeing for hygienic provision of washing facilities. Boarders gave their views to inspectors in written surveys and all had the opportunity to talk in person to inspectors. Inspectors found serious inadequacies in how the service administers medication and first aid, how it records and evidences safe recruitment for adults and how it plans to reduce risk from hazards in the environment, including risk from fire. These shortfalls in the areas of being healthy, staying safe and organisation have the potential for serious impact on children's health and safety. There are many positives about the school, most particularly the good relationships between adults and boarders and the strong ethos of community and shared responsibility. Boarders are proud of their school and appreciate the care of the staff. The school has good outcomes for helping children to enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution in their lives.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the monitoring inspection in March 2008, inspectors made six recommendations to: ensure the school followed good medication procedures when administering medication, make sure that its safeguarding procedures were up to date, and to plan thoroughly for a range of emergencies that could affect the school and boarders. The school was also asked to improve the cleanliness and facilities for boarders in toilets and washing and to take effective action to define and reduce the environmental risks throughout the school, but particularly to reduce the likelihood of fire and infection. The school has taken action to improve the physical environment and there are new toilets and refurbished bathrooms, many bedrooms have been painted and new carpets fitted in many areas. The school looks significantly cleaner and more comfortable in boarding areas. All staff have been trained in child protection and there are new safeguarding procedures approved by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The crisis management plan includes extensive detail about the risk from scabies and measures to control infection. Insufficient action has been taken to rectify the shortfalls in medication practice and to ensure a safe environment. Boarders are pleased with the improvements in their living accommodation and bathing facilities.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Boarders gain a satisfactory understanding of the benefits of healthy living as they have opportunities to explore, test and develop their physical skills. For example, they go on weekend activities to local parks and they also enjoy playing sports games in the secure school playground. A broad range of resources such as pool and table tennis, together with team games such as football enables boarders to further develop good peer relationships. Consequently, all boarders reap the benefits of fresh air and exercise. Boarders' general health is promoted through an imaginative personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on countering major risks to health, including substance abuse and has taken action to rectify and prevent further recurrence of infections such as scabies through improvement in hygienic standards. Boarders say that the diet has improved and is now much more healthy with regular vegetables and fruit. One parent said 'The food they provide is nutritious, hygiene is also well practised.' Boarders' health issues are addressed promptly and appointments made with local medical services. There are serious shortfalls in how health treatment is delivered and recorded and how medication is managed. The current policy and procedure is insufficient to give safe guidance about how to receive, store, administer and dispose of medication. Staff are not trained in administering medication and do not have clear guidance and this results in unsafe practice. For example, children's records do not show when they have had first aid treatment or even when they have been taken to hospital for treatment following accidents. This means there is no evidence that satisfactory treatment has been given. Children are given homely remedies, such as paracetamol but there is no record made. This poor practice places boarders at significant risk of harm as staff have no way of monitoring the amount given or the time elapsed between doses. Therefore, boarders potentially could take more than the required stated safe dosage. Older boarders administer medication and first aid to younger boarders. This is an adult responsibility. Where prescribed medication is administered, staff do not make an individual record but a shared record. This means that the children's information is not confidential to them. Written consent is given by parents for the administration of both homely and prescribed medication, although this form does not seek specific permission to administer any first aid treatment. This potentially compromises the swift and safe administration of appropriate first aid treatment to boarders. The school has no stock control or auditing process in place to ensure that children have the medication they need. One boarder's medication had run out the day before the inspection commenced. No repeat prescription had been sourced or doctor's appointment made. Therefore, this boarder had gone without the needed treatment he required. First aid boxes in the medical room were not fully stocked and did not contain all the materials needed to administer first aid. This poor practice significantly compromises boarders' health and welfare. Boarders are not adequately supervised and looked after when they are ill. Depending on their age, they will use either their own room or the sick room. Staff say they check on boarders every hour. However, if a boarder's illness suddenly becomes more serious they would not easily be able to summon assistance. The medication is kept in a filing cabinet and an unlocked fridge in the sick room. Sick children using the room would have unsupervised access to any medication stored in fridge. In surveys to Ofsted, 92% of boarders were confident that staff would help them if they were unwell and reported 'At times of illness we are treated well.'

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Boarders are protected from bullying. In surveys, 92% of boarders are emphatic they do not experience bullying at school. Boarders and staff are clear that bullying is not tolerated in the school and boarders confirmed that staff and prefects are quick to act in relation to bullying behaviour. Boarders are protected from abuse. The majority of boarders (77%) feel fully protected from harm, others that they are usually safe. One commented 'Those who look after us always consult us and ask if we have any problems, thus keeping harm out of our way.' The school has improved its child protection policy and all staff across the school have been trained by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Ofsted has had no concerns about how the school protects children. One parent said 'Young people are kept safe in the service,' and that this was 'Because they have good supervisors, children are well informed about safeguarding and courses are given to children to help themselves in cases of emergency.' Boarders state that the use of discipline within the school is fair and appropriate. Children appreciate the approach taken by adults and are clear about right and wrong. Young people say "We know what the rules are and know what will happen if we break them". The school keeps good records of behavioural matters. Boarders described the rewards for good behaviour across four areas of cleanliness, behaviour, religion and academic. The atmosphere around the school is calm and non-authoritarian; adults talk gently to boys. Relationships between adults and boarders are based on mutual respect. Boys are courteous, welcoming and above all, happy. Boarders are able to raise concerns and complaints with confidence, 55% of boarders said they would go to one of the teaching staff or people in charge of the school if they had a concern. Of the 40% who said they would go to someone else, they chose other students, friends or prefects or straight to their parents. One boarder commented; 'Everyone here is kind of like a big brother or a small brother or can I say a second family.' There have been no serious complaints. Ofsted has had no complaints about the school. Staff make routine checks of emergency lighting, and fire alarms and drills take place. Staff and children know how to escape in the event of a fire, however, there is no formal identification of fire risks or a plan to reduce these risks as required by The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. There has not been an inspection by the Fire Service since this law was enacted in October 2006. Staff have completed a fire risk questionnaire on line, however, this does not show how risks are to be minimised nor is there a record of any action taken arising from the initial questionnaire. Door wedges are used throughout the sleeping area to prop doors open and this means that fire could spread easily throughout the school. The risk from fire is not routinely monitored by the Principal. Boarders' personal privacy is respected. The school has clear rules about personal space and proper clothing to cover the body in accordance with Islamic law. There is not a vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders, although there are some good elements to the school's recruitment procedure. For example, procedures include asking referees about applicants' suitability to work with children, recording telephone reference checks, pro forma to record interview and recruitment process, which includes gaps in employment. However, these procedures are not routinely applied or fully completed for new staff. There is no application form and CVs do not always give a complete working history. Records are confusing, for example one staff had two start dates, which indicated they had started before CRBs were returned and before all other elements of safe recruitment were in place. This lack of rigour puts children at risk. Some adults work as volunteers first and the recruitment documentation does not make clear when this happens or when staff have left and returned to employment later. Boarders, however, are confident and one said that; 'The people who look after us are only selected if they can be trusted.' Boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures and there is supervision of all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises. Boarders

have their own accommodation, secure from public intrusion. Boys are confident that no day pupils use their accommodation. The school currently has defunct CCTV cameras in sleeping corridors. These are for the purpose of observing boys' night time movements. This has the potential to compromise privacy. The school has a written health and safety policy which it does not fulfil. There is no effective system of risk assessment to identify and reduce risk to borders in advance as described in the policy. Staff with health and safety responsibilities have not been trained and have not taken action to meet a recommendation made in March to complete effective risk assessments. However, staff and boarders are alert to hazards and report them for repair as they occur. This is documented. One boarder said the school environment was safe; 'No major obstacles that will cause any accidents or injuries.'

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

The school has a balanced view of the boarders' need for social, educational, spiritual, emotional and physical needs and provides opportunities for all. Boarders enjoy their time at school. They have long days, and attend school in six week sessions. There is some form of formal study seven days a week. Boarders say there is plenty of time to play football and like the weekly swimming and regular sports activities. Many boarders commented that recreational activities had improved. Boarders receive good personal support from staff. Each boarder should have one or more person to whom they can turn for advice or guidance. There is a good tutor system with sympathetic young tutors who see their age as an advantage in offering relevant advice to boarders. One boarder commented 'The teachers that we have here are really good.' A tutor said of the relationship with boarders 'Respect brings more thirst for knowledge.' The school's independent listener is known and familiar to boys, many of whom mentioned him positively. Boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination. The school is specifically for Muslim boys. The school is conscious of their role and welcoming of the local community. For example, each year prominent members of the community, including neighbours, are invited to the school. Boys have also made a reciprocal visit to the Lord Mayor. The school encourages young people to assume responsibility and to have a voice. The school fosters a sense of egalitarianism and a feeling of community. One parent commented that they like the ethos of older boarders caring for younger boarders.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Boarders are supported and encouraged to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school, and have a daily meeting with their tutor where they can share their views. Prefects have devised a first rate programme of meetings aimed at enabling students to voice their views and develop skills to deal with emerging dilemmas faced by youth in Britain. Boarders described this 'Anjuman' programme: each boarder takes responsibility for giving a presentation on a moral issue to a group of boys. This is an initiative of the senior prefects and combines consultation, PHSE, school council and citizenship within the school curriculum. It offers practical opportunities for all boys to practice public speaking, marshalling logical arguments and conveying a positive message to their peers. Boys said that they could raise any suggestions with the Principal or their tutors and that improvements had been made since the Ofsted survey. One boarder commented of his time at the school; 'It has transformed me as a person on the whole, teaching me important skills and valuable tools which will aid me in my future life.'

Boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families. There is access to a payphone and internet once a week. Boarders said this contact worked and was private.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

The school is housed in Victorian office buildings. Boarders have satisfactory accommodation. Boarding houses are clean and boys have adequate private toilet and washing facilities. The school has taken action to improve the standards in the bedrooms and have refitted bathrooms. Boarders are appreciative of the improved standards of cleanliness and fittings in bathrooms and of the newly painted bedrooms.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The school has a clear and detailed statement of boarding principles and practice which is provided to parents, boarders and staff. There is also a staff manual of procedures. One parent said 'I am confident there is no better place for my child.' Another that 'Parents are put at ease knowing their child is safe and are kept informed on a regular basis.' Crises affecting boarders' welfare are well managed and the school has learnt from the recent scabies outbreak which it resolved satisfactorily. The organisation is inadequate because there are few formal systems for assuring the quality of the provision and consequently two major areas of medication and risk assessment have the potential for serious risk of harm to boarders. The school's informal systems have not identified these weak areas. There is no systematic written process of monitoring risk assessments and accidents. Written systems are better established for behavioural and disciplinary matters. There are no formal written reports of monitoring of the boarding provision or reports to governors and trustees. However, there is much about the organisation that is good, for example the close involvement of the Principal in boarding life, his accessibility to staff and children alike; the care and motivation of the staff team for the children to succeed; and their dedication and concern for the children. Boarders are confident that the principal takes action to improve their experience in boarding. Boarders are adequately supervised by staff. Outside of the classroom, staff are sufficient in number for the age and number of boarders but not for administering first aid or medication as they rely on older boarders to do this. Parents and boarders were confident that they were well supervised. A parent commented 'School keeps a close eye every night to check if students are in bed safely, which gives us peace of mind.' A boarder said 'We all feel secure' and that this was due to the protection given by the supervisors. Boarders are looked after by motivated and caring staff with specific boarding duties. Whilst there is no formal recorded induction, staff are clear about duties and their supportive role with boarders. Boarding staff are trained in child protection and some in first aid. Staff with specific responsibility for areas such as health and safety and risk assessment, fire safety and health have no training or appraisal about their roles and this means that they may not fully understand the requirements of current good practice. This is evident in the shortfalls in these areas. They are however, committed and dedicated. Many staff described their aspirations for the boys they cared for, hoping they would develop into well qualified and respected individuals. A parent said 'The staff are committed to the well being of the pupils in all areas of development, social, physical, emotional and educational and this is apparent through their communication and practices.'

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all first aid and minor treatment and medication is administered by competent, designated staff. (NMS 15.7)
- create written procedures and ensure safe provision of safe first aid, health care and prescription and non-prescription medications. (NMS 15.9)
- ensure safe storage of medication. (NMS 15.10)
- keep individual health and welfare records for boarders that show all medication, treatment, illnesses, accidents and injuries and ensure that these records are confidential to the individual child. (NMS 15 & 7.5)
- ensure vigorous selection and vetting procedures include all elements of 38.2 and are always applied. (NMS 38)
- record a fire risk assessment that identifies and reduces risk. (NMS 26)
- put in place an effective system of risk assessment, with written records, to identify all the risks from buildings, activities and grounds. (NMS 47.9)
- ensure use of surveillance equipment (CCTV) does not intrude on boarders' reasonable privacy. (NMS 41.7)
- ensure that risk assessments, accidents and complaints are regularly (at least twice a term) monitored by the Head or a designated senior member of staff. (NMS 23.2)
- ensure there are sufficient staff who are competent to meet the needs of boarders, for example to administer first aid and medication. (NMS 31)
- ensure all staff with boarding duties have induction training and receive regular review of their boarding practice, with opportunities for continued training in boarding, for example: health and safety, fire safety and administration of medication. (NMS 34.1)

Annex

Annex A

National Minimum Standards for boarding school

Being healthy

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' health is promoted (NMS 6)
- safeguarding and promoting boarders' health and welfare are supported by appropriate records (NMS 7)
- boarders' receive first aid and health care as necessary (NMS 15)
- boarders are adequately supervised and looked after when ill (NMS 16)
- boarders are supported in relation to any health or personal problems (NMS 17)
- boarders receive good quality catering provision (NMS 24)
- boarders have access to food and drinking water in addition to main meals (NMS 25)
- boarders are suitably accommodated when ill (NMS 48)
- boarders' clothing and bedding are adequately laundered (NMS 49).

Ofsted considers 6 and 15 the key standards to be inspected.

Staying safe

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are protected from bullying (NMS 2)
- boarders are protected from abuse (NMS 3)
- use of discipline with boarders is fair and appropriate (NMS 4)
- boarders' complaints are responded to appropriately (NMS 5)
- the operation of any prefect system safeguards and promotes boarders' welfare (NMS 13)
- boarders' welfare is protected in any appointment of educational guardians by the school (NMS 22)
- boarders are protected from the risk of fire (NMS 26)
- the welfare of any children other than the school's pupils is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated by the school (NMS 28)
- boarders' safety and welfare are protected during high risk activities (NMS 29)
- boarders' personal privacy is respected (NMS 37)
- there is vigorous selection and vetting of all staff and volunteers working with boarders (NMS 38)
- boarders are protected from unsupervised contact at school with adults who have not been subject to the school's complete recruitment checking procedures; all unchecked visitors to the boarding premises are supervised (NMS 39)
- boarders have their own accommodation, which is secure from public intrusion (NMS 41)
- boarders are protected from safety hazards (NMS 47)

Ofsted considers 2, 3, 4, 5, 26, 37, 38, 39, 41 and 47 the key standards to be inspected.

Enjoying and achieving

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders have access to a range and choice of activities (NMS 11)
- boarders do not experience inappropriate discrimination (NMS 18)
- boarders' welfare is not compromised by unusual or onerous demands (NMS 27)
- boarders have satisfactory provision to study (NMS 43)
- boarders have access to a range of safe recreational areas (NMS 46)

Ofsted considers 14 and 18 the key standards to be inspected.

Annex A

Making a positive contribution

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders are enabled to contribute to the operation of boarding in the school (NMS 12)
- boarders receive personal support from staff (NMS 14)
- boarders can maintain private contact with their parents and families (NMS 19)
- new boarders are introduced to the school's procedures and operation, and are enabled to settle in (NMS 21)
- boarders have appropriate access to information and facilities outside the school (NMS 30)
- there are sound relationships between staff and boarders (NMS 36)

Ofsted considers 12 and 19 the key standards to be inspected.

Achieving economic well-being

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- boarders' possessions and money are protected (NMS 20)
- boarders are provided with satisfactory accommodation (NMS 40)
- boarders have satisfactory sleeping accommodation (NMS 42)
- boarders have adequate private toilet and washing facilities (NMS 44)
- boarders have satisfactory provision for changing by day (NMS 45)
- boarders can obtain personal requisites while accommodated at school (NMS 50)

Ofsted considers 51 the key standard to be inspected.

Organisation

The intended outcomes for these standards are:

- a suitable statement of the school's principles and practice should be available to parents, boarders and staff (NMS 1)
- there is clear leadership of boarding in the school (NMS 8)
- crises affecting boarders' welfare are managed effectively (NMS 9)
- the school's organisation of boarding contributes to boarders' welfare (NMS 10)
- risk assessment and school record-keeping contribute to boarders' welfare (NMS 23)
- boarders are supervised adequately by staff (NMS 31)
- staff exercise appropriate supervision of boarders leaving the school site (NMS 32)
- boarders are adequately supervised at night (NMS 33)
- boarders are looked after by staff which have specific boarding duties, and have received adequate induction and continued training (NMS 34)
- boarders are looked after by staff which follow clear boarding policies and practice (NMS 35)
- the welfare of boarders placed in lodgings is safeguarded and promoted (NMS 51)
- the welfare of boarders is safeguarded and promoted while accommodated away from the school site on short-term visits (NMS 52)

Ofsted considers 1, 23, 31 and 34 the key standards to be inspected.