

Al Jamiah Al Islamiyyah

Inspection report for boarding school

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Inspector	Lynn O'Driscoll
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Date of last inspection	23 June 2008

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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

This is an independent Muslim boarding school which is registered with the Department for Education and Skills for 170 boys aged between 11 and 21 years. It is a large detached property standing in its own private grounds and is situated in a town within walking distance of local amenities. There are currently 145 boarders and the accommodation is divided into those under 16, those in the sixth form provision and adult students continuing in their Islamic studies.

There are no students with statements of special educational needs and none who are physically disabled.

The school is maintained by a board of trustees which meets every week to review the boarding provision. Individual members also regularly make unannounced visits to the school to check on boarders' welfare.

Its mission statement is 'to encourage the development of independent, well balanced and well educated young men'.

Summary

This judgement is reached following a two day notice integrated inspection which took place over three days by a team of three inspectors. Compliance with all the key national minimum standards was assessed and boarders were actively involved in this process.

The majority of boarders are generally happy at the school and particularly benefit from sound relationships with the staff. They also recognise the significant improvements made to the premises. They say, 'staff are friendly here and are always trying to make our stay as comfortable as possible'. However, they are especially dissatisfied with the current arrangements to contact and visit home. There is also an insufficient range of constructive leisure activities and outings provided.

The school consistently strives to improve upon the services provided, but the systems and paperwork in place does not adequately reflect this genuine commitment and dedication. There are also a number of shortfalls which directly impact on the health and safety of boarders.

The overall quality rating is inadequate.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is satisfactory.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

The overall quality of boarding is inadequate. Ten recommendations were made at the last inspection on 23 June 2008, but not all have been satisfactorily addressed. Some improvements have been made to the first aid and medical arrangements but there is not signed parental consent for every boarder and the system of stock control is still not sufficiently robust. More information is now held on boarders in respect to their health and safety, but sanction records are not satisfactorily maintained to show they are fair and proportionate to the particular misdemeanour.

Although boarders acknowledge that meals have improved, the majority say they are still not sufficiently varied, there is too much oil used and no fruit or fresh vegetables. Moreover, there remains limited constructive leisure activities and facilities for boarders. Broken equipment is not efficiently replaced, there is not a choice of common rooms and organised trips out are rare. In particular boarders say, 'there is not much to do at the weekends'. Their ability to keep abreast of world affairs is also restricted as televisions are not allowed, newspapers are not provided and there is limited access to the internet.

The school's child protection policy has still not been formally ratified by the local children's safeguarding board to ensure it is consistent with local procedures. Moreover, shortfalls identified in risk assessments and health and safety checks are not efficiently addressed so the safety of all boarders, staff and visitors is not ensured.

Suitable local arrangements are in place to ensure boarders have access to health professionals and a sufficient number of staff are trained in first aid to attend to any minor injuries. The majority of boarders are also satisfied with the arrangements in place if they are poorly.

Most boarders confirm that they feel safe, well cared for and respected. A few did report incidents of bullying but all confirmed that they are able to go to someone to ensure it is appropriately addressed. Indeed, a significant number would go direct to the principal because, 'he is a kind man and you can always talk to him.' Boarders say, 'bullying is quite rare. However, it does happen now and again and the victim has someone to go to. It is not tolerated and bullies are dealt with accordingly'.

There have been no recent formal complaints made, but boarders say they know how to should the need arise. They also have direct access to an independent counsellor. However, the complaints procedure does not include the contact details of Ofsted.

There are opportunities for boarders to positively contribute to any school developments including regular surveys and the school council with representatives from each year group. However, these are not satisfactorily documented to evidence that the issues raised are considered and acted upon if appropriate.

A policy in respect to boarders who go missing is in place, but the records are not in sufficient detail to evidence the efforts made to locate the boarder, their safe return and any reasons given for being absent.

A strength of this school is the positive relationships between boarders and staff, and boarders confirm that their opinions are genuinely listened to. They say, 'everyone is so caring and kind and they give you help if needed'. Moreover, behaviour and good manners are exemplary and boarders confirm that the few sanctions imposed are generally fair. However, there is one major exception. The vast majority are extremely aggrieved that due to the misuse of mobiles by a few boarders there is a total ban on their use. This significantly impacts on their ability to maintain contact with family especially as there are woefully insufficient payphones provided. Many also find it difficult to wait a month for a home visit and that their stays are too short.

Fire safety records are in satisfactory order showing that the internal checks are undertaken at the required frequencies and minor repairs are efficiently addressed. Regular fire drills also ensure that boarders know exactly what to do in the case of a real fire. However, fire extinguishers are not all serviced at least annually and the required safety certificates to evidence that the school is maintained at a safe standard could not be found. It is acknowledged that the school are in the process of making significant improvements to the security of the grounds as current arrangements are not sufficiently robust to protect boarders from intruders.

Moreover, not all the staff files include the details specified in the national minimum standards to evidence a safe and competent workforce.

Boarders are generally satisfied with the accommodation and the sufficiency of the toileting facilities. There are also suitable laundry facilities. However, they do report that the dining room is particularly cold. Moreover, this is also used as the sports hall so its use is restricted. There are some single bedrooms and a range of different sized dormitories up to a maximum of 10 sharing, but there is little evidence of personalisation.

Boarders say that the school is sufficiently staffed at all times to safeguard and promote their welfare. The school have also recently recruited a senior administrator to strengthen the management team recognising the significant shortfalls in their systems and documentation. Annual appraisals are now in place to ensure staff remain competent in their respective roles and responsibilities and there is an ongoing programme of training opportunities to ensure continuous development. However, the staff handbook does not include all the required information.

The monitoring processes in place are also not sufficiently robust and there is no written strategic plan for responding to crises in line with the national minimum standards. Moreover, the statement of boarding principles and practices does not accurately reflect the age and numbers of boarders for whom they are registered.

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 there is signed parental consent for every boarder in respect to the safe administration of first aid and medication (NMS 15.4)
- ensure accurate records are maintained of the stock of non prescribed medication (NMS 15.2)
- ensure sanction records are satisfactorily maintained (NMS 4.6)
- ensure meals provide a sufficiently varied, nutritious and balanced diet (NMS 24.2)
- ensure a sufficient range of constructive activities are made available, especially at the weekends (NMS 46.1)
- ensure there is a range and choice of common rooms or other recreational areas available to boarders outside school time (NMS 46.2)
- ensure boarders have appropriate access to school sports, recreational and hobby facilities outside class time (NMS 11.4)
- ensure boarders have suitable access to information about events in the world outside the school (NMS 30.5)
- ensure the school's child protection policy is formally ratified by the local children's safeguarding board (NMS 3.1)
- ensure there is an efficient response to any shortfalls identified following risk assessments and health and safety checks of the premises (NMS 40.6)
- ensure the complaints procedure provided to boarders and their parents includes contact details of Ofsted (NMS 5.4)
- ensure minutes are taken of the school council meetings that adequately reflect the issues raised by boarders, the discussions and actions taken (NMS 12.2)
- ensure there is documentary evidence that the findings from internal questionnaires are taken into account in the development and practice of boarding (NMS 12.2)
- ensure missing from home records are satisfactorily maintained (NMS 3.9)
- ensure there are suitable arrangements in place to enable boarders to contact family (NMS 19.3)
- ensure all fire extinguishers are refilled or replaced as necessary and serviced at least annually and all the required safety certificates are in place (NMS 26.4)
- ensure robust security systems are in place to protect boarders from intruders (NMS 41.5)
- ensure staff files included all the required details to evidence a safe and competent workforce (NMS 38.2)
- ensure boarders are enabled to personalise an area of their dormitory with suitable posters and personal items (NMS 42.11)

- ensure the staff handbook includes all the details specified in the national minimum standards (NMS 35.5)
- ensure there is an effective system in place, by a senior member of staff, to monitor all the matters identified in the national minimum standards, at least twice a term (NMS 23.2)
- ensure there are planned responses to a range of foreseeable major incidents or crises (NMS 9.2)
- ensure the statement of boarding principles and practice accurately reflects the school's registration in respect to ages and numbers of boarders. (NMS 1.3)