

Darul Uloom Leicester

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	David Young
Social care inspector	Jo Vyas

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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, 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.^{1, 2}

The inspection of boarding 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 boarding schools, in order to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and the government of the quality and standard of the service provided.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Darul Uloom is an independent Islamic educational institute for male students aged 11 to 23 years. Established in 1993 and located in the Belgrave area of Leicester, it offers secondary and further education as well as advanced Islamic education. This prepares students to become imams or Islamic theologians. There are 141 students on roll, 69 of whom are boarders. There are no students with statements of special educational needs. The school aims 'to nurture self-respect and confidence and to raise the self-esteem of its students as Muslims, enabling them to integrate successfully in the multicultural society without compromising their Islamic beliefs and values'. The school offers a complete course of Islamic theology and secular education at Key Stages 3 and 4. The academic and boarding aspects of the school were inspected simultaneously. The last full inspection of the school and boarding provision was in May 2009. A progress monitoring visit took place in March 2010.

Evaluation of the school

Darul Uloom provides a good quality of education and enables students to make good progress in their learning as a result of good teaching and assessment. Students develop confidence and self-respect as Muslims and arrangements for their personal development are good. Provision to ensure their health and safety, including safeguarding, are good. The school largely meets its aims although the satisfactory curriculum and boarding arrangements do not provide sufficient opportunities to ensure that students are fully prepared for the responsibilities and opportunities of adult life. The school has improved since its last inspection and now meets all but three of the regulatory requirements. The overall effectiveness of the boarding provision is satisfactory. The school must ensure that it meets those national minimum standards for boarding schools which have not been met.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

⁴ www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory. It achieves a suitable balance between the Islamic and secular strands of the curriculum. The Islamic curriculum is good and the aims of the school are largely achieved through its successful implementation. The time allocation for the secular curriculum is relatively restricted but students make good progress and mostly achieve good results in GCSE examinations before they leave. The overall curriculum is not good because students, particularly boarders, have insufficient opportunities to be involved in the community beyond the school, although a link has been established recently with a local care home for the elderly. The comprehensive programme of Islamic studies, the Nizamiyyah, is taught to all students in mixed-age classes during the long morning. This part of the curriculum is broad and successfully combines a number of elements, including Hifz (memorisation of the Qur'an), Tajweed (recitation of the Qur'an) and Fiqh (the study of Islamic jurisprudence). Students are grouped according to their level of knowledge and understanding of the Islamic teachings and this arrangement ensures that individual needs are catered for well. Urdu, and to a lesser extent Arabic, are taught as modern foreign languages and result in significant success in GCSE examinations. The majority of post-16 students continue with their Islamic studies in the afternoon and the programme makes a strong contribution to the spiritual and moral development of students. The secular curriculum is taught appropriately in National Curriculum age group classes. The students study subjects which cover all the required areas of learning apart from inadequate provision for aesthetic and creative experiences. Students are taught calligraphy and take part in nasheed (Islamic vocal music) but this is not a systematic, planned programme of creative learning which enables students to express their imagination and creativity. There is a good emphasis on English, mathematics and science, including practical experimental work. Students also enjoy, and benefit from opportunities to develop their skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). The history course combines effectively aspects of Islamic and British history. Older students have access to A Level studies, depending on demand, and a number are currently making suitable progress with the study of A Level sciences. Appropriate opportunities have been introduced for Year 11 students to take part in work experience once they have completed their GCSE examinations, and suitable careers advice is provided enabling them to make suitable choices regarding further education courses. There are insufficient opportunities, particularly for boarders, to engage in enrichment activities beyond the school day. There is no programme of sports, clubs and recreational activity in the evenings or at weekends apart from the opportunity for students to go swimming. Students do not have the opportunity to leave the site to go to local shops, to the park or to other recreational venues and this restricts their preparation for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The school library has been closed for some time as it is being refurbished and reorganised; students state that they would like access to this facility to be restored as soon as possible.

The quality of teaching and assessment is good and results in good progress for students in both the Islamic and secular aspects of the curriculum. Students state that teaching is good, and their respect for their teachers is evident in the high quality of relationships in classes. Lessons are well planned, the objectives for

learning are made clear at the start of lessons and used well to summarise and reinforce learning. Most lessons are tightly structured, well-paced and intellectually challenging. Students enjoy good opportunities to take part in discussion and to test their understanding through effective questioning which often enables them to uncover deeper layers of learning, for example in examining what makes a good narrative in English, or how to construct a formula to determine a sequence in mathematics. The small teaching groups ensure that individual learning needs are identified and addressed immediately by teachers, ensuring that students are all able to engage in learning at an appropriate level. Good examples were seen of appropriate extension activities, for example in mathematics and ICT, ensuring that a good pace of learning is maintained for all students. Senior staff monitor the work of teachers and the progress made by students but opportunities for teaching staff to engage in dialogue and development with subject specialists from other schools are limited. The memorisation and correct pronunciation of the Qur'an are particular strengths in the Islamic curriculum where high standards are achieved.

Students' work is assessed regularly in both strands of the curriculum. In the Islamic curriculum regular internal assessments are conducted and teachers are very aware of the individual standards being achieved by students. National Curriculum levels have recently been introduced to assess students' progress in the secular curriculum subjects. Students are mostly aware of the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to make further progress. Teachers have a good understanding of how to raise standards and improve grades in Key Stage 4 GCSE subjects. Apart from a dip in the results in 2012, GCSE results have been consistently above the national average in recent years and demonstrate good progress for the great majority of students. Students in the current Key Stage 4 classes are on track to restore the previous high standards.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The Islamic curriculum makes a particularly strong contribution to the spiritual and moral development of students. Daily opportunities to read prayers, recite the Qur'an and to study the Seerah (prophetic character) enable students to develop self-confidence and respect for their faith. Students value the opportunity to combine their academic studies with the development of their identity as Muslims. Students have excellent attitudes to their work, and behaviour throughout the school is consistently good. Their attendance is excellent as is their willingness to engage in further study beyond the school day.

Relationships throughout the school are strong and boarders appreciate the dormitory style accommodation which enables them to make strong friendships. Students share in responsibilities for cleaning, for serving food and leading in daily prayers. Their social development is enhanced by the quality of relationships between students and teaching staff and among the students themselves. Relationships between supervisory staff and boarders are less well developed as language barriers inhibit regular, high quality communication. Students' social and cultural development is strong within the school and they have a good sense of

identity as young Muslims. Opportunities for communication with families and friends are satisfactory although most students would value an increase in the number of telephones or access to computers for email communication. The social integration of students into the wider community is more restricted due to limited opportunities to leave the site at weekends. They contribute to charitable collections and provide gifts for neighbours at Eid. Aspects of the citizenship programme make a contribution to their knowledge of services in the wider community but this is restricted by their limited access to news and information beyond the life of the school. Students have positive and respectful attitudes to people of alternative beliefs and cultures; they state that Islam teaches them respect for other people.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are good both in the school and in the boarding provision. Suitable policies guide the work of staff and procedures for safeguarding are comprehensive and implemented consistently. Students' behaviour is managed fairly and students state that staff do not tolerate bullying. All aspects of staff training, including child protection, first aid and health and safety are attended to systematically and kept up to date. All appropriate aspects of school life are subject to suitable risk assessment, including fire safety. Routine checks on fire safety equipment are maintained and logged regularly, including emergency evacuations.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

The school has appropriate procedures for ensuring the suitability of staff and proprietors to work with students. Details of all required checks are maintained in an up-to-date single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The premises and accommodation provide suitable facilities for safe and effective learning. Classrooms are of adequate size for the numbers of students and specialist facilities for science and ICT enhance the suitability of the provision. The boarding accommodation is comfortable and maintained to an appropriate level although most areas are in need of redecoration. There is adequate outside space for play and recreation and students particularly appreciate the all-weather pitch.

Provision of information

The school provides appropriate and up-to-date information for parents and carers through its parent handbook and the school website. Parents and carers are made aware of the main school policies and their rights of access to copies of these. Information about the school and the curriculum is comprehensive but information about boarding routines and facilities is limited. Parents and carers are provided with suitable information about students' progress in the various subjects of the curriculum.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's arrangements for the management of any complaints meet regulatory requirements.

Leadership and management of boarding

The leadership and management of boarding are satisfactory. There are established procedures and routines which are well understood by students and staff. The management team are clear about the aims and purposes for the boarding provision and keep all aspects under review. Staff are trained effectively and maintain regular contact with the management team. Systems for staff induction and regular review of boarding practice are not sufficiently formalised to ensure that any issues are followed through thoroughly. However, a development plan is in place which reflects the views of students as well as staff. There is evidence that the views of students are taken into account in the development of the boarding facilities. The overall effectiveness of boarding is satisfactory.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.⁵

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the quality of education provided (standards in part 1) and must:

- ensure there are appropriate plans and schemes of work in place for the aesthetic and creative area of experience (paragraph 2(1))
- ensure the curriculum gives pupils of compulsory school age experience in the aesthetic and creative area of experience (paragraph 2(2)(a))
- ensure the curriculum provides adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (paragraph 2(2)(j)).

National minimum standards

The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools.

- There is an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day (NMS 10.1)

⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/1997/contents/made.

- Boarders have access to information about events in the world outside the school, and access to local facilities which is appropriate to their age (NMS 10.4)

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Improve arrangements for the monitoring and review of teaching and boarding by:
 - the involvement of appropriate subject specialists from other schools in the observation of teaching, scrutiny of students' work and the development of consistent assessment of students' progress
 - ensuring a formalised and systematic approach to boarding staff induction and the review of boarding practice
 - reviewing the content of boarding information for parents and carers.
- Improve the residential experience for boarders by:
 - overcoming the language barriers between students and boarding supervisors
 - providing more enrichment activities outside of school hours and at weekends
 - improving the internal decoration of students' bedrooms
 - increasing opportunities for students to contact families, friends and the independent visitor.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience

Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience			✓	
Outcomes for boarders			✓	
Quality of boarding provision and care			✓	
Boarders' safety		✓		
Leadership and management of boarding			✓	

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Muslim boarding school		
Date school opened	November 1993		
Age range of pupils	11–23 years		
Gender of pupils	Boys		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 141	Girls: 0	Total: 141
Number of boarders	Boys: 69	Girls: 0	Total: 69
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800		
Annual fees (boarders)	£2,700		
Address of school	119 Loughborough Road Leicester LE4 5LN		
Telephone number	0116 2668922		
Email address	info@darulloomleicester.org		
Headteacher	Harun Musa		
Proprietor	Darul Uloom charity trust		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



9 November 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Darul Uloom Leicester, Leicester, LE4 5LN

I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. It is clear that you have great respect for your school and for the staff. The inspection judged that Darul Uloom provides you with a good quality of education and a satisfactory boarding experience. There are a number of good features to your school.

- You work hard, take your learning very seriously and your attendance and attitudes to lessons are excellent.
- You make good progress in all aspects of learning and, despite a dip in 2012, GCSE examination results are usually above the national average.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and challenge you to think and learn at a high level.
- You enjoy the boarding experience and develop good friendships.
- Your work and progress in your Islamic studies are of a high standard and you demonstrate a keen commitment to your beliefs and culture.

We identified some things which could be done to improve the quality of your experience in school and in boarding. We have asked the staff to provide more opportunities for creative and aesthetic experiences, such as art and music. We have also asked that you should have wider experiences of involvement in life outside of school, particularly for boarders at the weekends. We would like the school to ensure that you are well prepared for the responsibilities of adult life when you leave school. In addition, we have requested that there should be more opportunities for you to contact family and friends during the school term. You can play your part in the future success of the school by continuing your positive attitudes and hard work. We would like to wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Young
Lead inspector