

Darul Uloom Islamic High School

521–527 Coventry Road, Small Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B10 0LL

Inspection dates

19–21 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is an improving school. Pupils, parents and staff agree that the new headteacher and his senior team have made many improvements to the school over a short period of time.
- Leaders ensure that the school meets the independent school standards.
- In 2017, Year 11 pupils' progress and attainment were strong and improved from previous years. Pupils left the school with a range of valuable qualifications.
- Staff have completed effective training provided by leaders on improving the quality of learning and teaching. As a result, teaching consistently meets pupils' needs. Teachers' questioning is often thought-provoking and encourages pupils to think deeply.
- Staff prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. This is due to leaders' work to promote fundamental British values and the well-designed spiritual, moral, social and cultural education curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is positive. They follow the school rules and treat their peers and staff respectfully.
- The madrasa and secular curricula are well balanced and give pupils the opportunity to study a wide range of interesting subjects.
- Leaders have designed an assessment system which tracks pupils' progress well. However, this system lacks formal structure and moderation is not recorded consistently.
- Presently, a small senior team takes responsibility for leadership of all aspects of the school. Leadership at other levels needs development.
- While pupils with low and middle prior attainment make strong progress, most-able pupils' progress is not as strong as other pupils in the school.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers do not make sure that tasks are appropriate and engaging. When this happens, pupils' attention drifts and their progress slows.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop leadership in the school by:
 - developing teachers' ability to lead subject areas and support senior leaders in the running of the school
 - strengthening the work leaders do to ensure the accuracy of assessments by engaging in independent moderation of assessments and the recording of internal moderation activities.
- Make sure that the quality of teaching in all classes is as good as the best in the school by:
 - continuing the work leaders have begun on providing effective training for staff, including teaching assistants
 - making sure that all new staff swiftly understand and meet leaders' expectations of teachers
 - developing teachers' classroom management skills and ensuring that pupils are given tasks that engage them and meet their needs, limiting low-level disruption.
- Improve the most able pupils' progress, so that these pupils access the highest grades, by:
 - identifying the most able pupils through key stage 2 outcomes and teacher assessments
 - ensuring that teachers consistently offer stretch and challenge to these pupils over time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Following a period of turbulence in the school, the new headteacher, effectively supported by a committed and able leadership team, has made a range of positive changes in a short period of time. As a result, teaching, staff morale and pupils' safety, well-being and progress have improved.
- Leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards have been met. They regularly reflect on the standards to make sure that any shortcomings are rectified immediately.
- Leaders have adopted a safeguarding policy modelled on the Birmingham local authority policy. The school does not have a website, but parents can request a copy of this policy. Leaders show clearly how parents can request a copy through an induction pack and signage at the school office. The policy meets all statutory requirements.
- Through a new tracking system, leaders evaluate pupils' progress regularly throughout the year. Most pupils have key stage 2 scores and challenging target grades are set using these scores. Very positive outcomes for Year 11 in 2017 show that, in most subject areas, teachers competently assess pupils' progress. This means they can make interventions when pupils fall behind. Senior leaders regularly monitor teachers' assessments to make sure that they are based on evidence of what pupils can do. However, this system is very informal. Leaders plan to use external moderators and external baseline tests to check on the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Since this has not yet started, it is too early to see any impact. The evidence that leaders have to show that assessments are accurate is convincing but limited in its volume.
- Leaders have made sure that teachers' training takes a high priority, and that expectations of staff are clear. All teachers have formally evaluated their expertise so that leaders can carefully tailor training to their needs. For example, the headteacher recently led training on matching tasks to pupils' abilities, managing pupils' behaviour, safeguarding and lesson planning. As a result, teachers are more consistently meeting pupils' needs in lessons. Teachers say that they value this training and the regular feedback that the headteacher gives following his 'drop-in' visits to lessons.
- Leaders have effectively evaluated the curriculum to see where it caters for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. They have used this evaluation to rewrite and strengthen the curriculum. This evaluation and the resulting curriculum plans are very detailed and presented in a way that helps teachers effectively and overtly to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values, equalities and the full range of protected characteristics. Leaders have made sure that where links between the curriculum, fundamental British values and equalities occur, they are obvious for pupils and that teachers know exactly what points are to be made. This approach means that leaders can be rightly confident that the improvements that they have made in this area are having a positive impact on pupils' understanding of fundamental British values and equalities.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It includes examined and non-examined activities so that pupils experience a rich range of experiences. In the mornings, pupils undertake classes in the sciences of Islam, Arabic, and the memorisation of the Koran. In the

afternoon, pupils have lessons based on the national curriculum, including mathematics, English and science, languages, creative arts, humanities, information and communication technology, physical education and citizenship.

- At key stage 3, pupils study a wider range of subjects to give them a variety of experiences. When preparing for GCSE examinations, leaders have developed a timetable that gives more time to core subjects. This flexibility enables pupils to focus more on English, mathematics and science as they approach their examinations.
- Parents are positive about the changes to the school over the past year. They say that pupils are safe in school, that pupils' behaviour is improving, that they get more information and are more involved in what happens at the school. As one parent commented: 'The openness of the school is positive. Teachers are willing to engage with parents.' Parents have also noticed that the way in which staff treat pupils has improved, and that relationships are strict but respectful between pupils and staff.
- Parents told inspectors that communication with the school has improved considerably. For example, the reports that parents receive about their children outline clearly what pupils' targets are, how well they are progressing towards them, and what they need to do to reach them. These reports are regular and cover both the Islamic and secular curricula. Parents appreciate the information that they receive.

Governance

- Since the last inspection, the trustees have changed the way the school is governed. With the aim of making sure that the headteacher can make the changes required with swiftness, there is now a single 'trustee in charge'. To ensure that this trustee can adequately hold school leaders to account, the school has appointed an independent external consultant. As a result, the trustee in charge is kept fully aware of developments in the school and the headteacher has been able to make changes very quickly when needed.
- The headteacher has planned further visits for the external consultant to continue to improve this model of governance. As there has only been one visit, it is too early to see the full impact of this model of governance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Registers are taken twice daily and are accurate. Absences are followed up diligently so that leaders can be sure that they identify any problems with missing pupils quickly.
- Leaders' checks on employees, including supply staff, are robust and complete. Leaders accurately record this information on the school's single central record.
- The designated safeguarding leaders are appropriately trained. Pupils and parents are clear about who they should go to if they have a problem. Staff complete annual training and tests to make sure that the training was effective. New staff have effective induction training and leaders meet formally each half term to review their procedures. Consequently, a culture of vigilance and safeguarding is prevalent across the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have ensured that teachers are increasingly well trained to teach effectively. Parents, pupils and teachers agree that teaching is improving quickly as a result, and that the increased consistency means that pupils know what to expect and staff can support each other's development.
- In most lessons, teachers' explanations are clear and pupils understand exactly what they have to do. Similarly, when teachers give feedback to pupils, they are clear on what their next steps are. This leads to good progress. In many lessons, teachers use analogy, demonstrations and examples to help pupils understand their work. Teaching is, therefore, varied and often responsive to pupils' different needs.
- Teachers' use of questioning is effective. In most lessons, teachers ask open, thought-provoking questions which help pupils think deeply and develop their understanding. For example, in one lesson, the teacher asked the class which was the most important part of the body. This provoked detailed and lively discussion and pupils developed their understanding of the role of the brain in relation to other organs of the body.
- Lessons have improved because teachers' planning is developing well. Teachers organise lessons well and leaders have invested in new resources which help teachers match tasks to pupils' needs. For example, in the madrasa curriculum, teachers use differentiated and graded exercises to teach Arabic and Islamic sciences.
- Through training and raising the expectations of staff, leaders have embedded all of the developments seen in the secular curriculum in the madrasa curriculum. This includes clear learning objectives, progress tracking and behaviour routines. As a result, outcomes in the madrasa curriculum are improving.
- Leaders have placed a great emphasis on all aspects of literacy. For example, they have installed a mini-library into each classroom, introduced reading diaries and times when pupils read for pleasure. They have also introduced a literacy marking policy so that pupils in all areas of the curriculum uphold the same standards of spelling, punctuation and grammar as are seen in English. The classroom libraries contain a variety of books for pupils to enjoy. These strategies to improve literacy have been effective and leaders now plan to refocus on the further development of pupils' literacy skills as the academic year progresses.
- In most cases, teachers deploy classroom assistants to positive effect. Almost all teaching assistants have an awareness of when and how to intervene. They display good questioning skills that enable pupils who fall behind to consolidate their ideas and make progress. However, this is variable and, in some cases, a few classroom assistants are not as effective as they could be.
- The level of challenge for pupils with high prior attainment is sometimes too low. While teachers often ask the most able pupils to act as experts for others, sometimes teachers ask these pupils to revise work they have already done, which does not consistently deepen or broaden their knowledge and skills. Leaders acknowledge this weakness and have plans in place to address it.
- In a small number of lessons, pupils' progress is weak because the tasks they are given are too easy, and teachers' planning is weaker. Leaders acknowledge that this is the case, particularly for new staff. They have plans in place to develop teachers' classroom skills

further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils generally have good attitudes to their learning and value the importance of their madrasa and secular learning.
- The new SMSC curriculum offers a variety of opportunities for pupils' personal development. Teachers take many opportunities to relate their lessons to matters of fundamental British values. For example, in a history lesson, the teacher explored the role of the suffragettes in gaining the vote for women, the importance of democracy and the rule of law. As a result of regular exploration of these things, pupils talk with increasing authority and knowledge about equalities, respect for those of all faiths and none, protected characteristics and British values. Their knowledge is supported by many examples from lessons and assemblies, such as parts of the Koran, stories, references to famous scientists, authors and figures from history. This is improving pupils' knowledge and understanding of equalities and British values.
- Leaders make sure that pupils have access to a range of resources and information, advice and guidance to help them choose their next steps in education or in employment and training. Pupils use an online software package, attend local careers fairs and have talks from a variety of professionals. As a result, pupils express the desire to go on to a very wide range of courses and areas of study.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is very rare and the school's records support this. They know who to speak to if there is a problem with bullying. Pupils who are new to the school told inspectors that they feel safe, and that their separate play areas mean that they can gradually get to know other pupils without feeling overwhelmed. Pupils' welfare and safety takes a high priority. Parents and pupils recognise that pupils' safety and well-being have improved over the past year.
- Pupils have knowledge of how to keep themselves safe from a range of risks, including those posed by using the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders have introduced clear reporting of behaviour issues and a rewards system to recognise positive behaviour. This has led to a reduction in the number of recorded incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils appreciate the rewards and say that they are well motivated to maintain good behaviour and for this to be recognised by leaders. Parents also recognise improvements in behaviour. The number of exclusions is low.
- In most lessons, pupils listen well and apply themselves studiously to their work. In social times, assemblies and between lessons, pupils move around the building safely and respectfully.
- Pupils' attendance has improved considerably over the last year. It is now broadly in line with the national average, as is persistent absence. Senior staff go out to the front of the

school each morning to greet the pupils, speak to parents and encourage punctuality. Parents agree that the senior staff place a strong emphasis on attendance and punctuality and that this has led to improvements.

- In a small number of lessons, where tasks are not matched well to pupils' starting points, pupils become distracted and some low-level disruption ensues. When this happens, pupils do not listen well, are slow to begin work and make limited progress. Pupils mentioned this to inspectors and inspectors observed it in lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, overall, Year 11 pupils made very strong progress from their starting points across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics. The vast majority of pupils left with at least five passes at grade C (or the new grade 4) and above. The majority of pupils gained eight GCSEs at grade C or above. All pupils gained both English and mathematics grade 4 or above. In most subjects, all entries resulted in grade C and above. This represented strong progress from the cohort's starting points and meant that pupils left with a range of valuable qualifications for their next steps. All pupils leaving in 2017 went on to higher levels of study at other education providers.
- Pupils' progress in the GCSE religious studies course is particularly strong. Leaders set challenging targets based on pupils' key stage 2 scores. From their starting points, most pupils across all year groups make progress in excess of their targets.
- Leaders measure pupils' progress in the Islamic curriculum in four main areas: pupils' character and behaviour, memorisation of the Koran, and progress in Arabic and Islamic sciences. In the Islamic curriculum, pupil's progress is good and improving.
- In Arabic, most pupils in Year 11 made good progress from their starting points. Many pupils arrive in Year 7 with limited skills in Arabic, and by the end of Year 8 are making strong progress towards their target grades. Other pupils arrive at the school with well-developed Arabic skills and leaders make sure that they take their examinations as soon as they are ready. These pupils achieve highly. The number of pupils who memorise the Koran is also increasing from a low starting point.
- Leaders have identified that pupils with high prior attainment do not always make the level of progress of which they are capable. They do not consistently secure the highest GCSE examination grades. Leaders have made this a focus for the coming year.
- Last year, there was some turbulence in the quality of teaching in mathematics and science for pupils in key stage 3. As a result, their progress as a group stalled and was weaker than it should have been. Leaders identified this issue and made improvements to teaching. As a result, current Year 8, 9 and 10 pupils are catching up, and more are reaching their target grades.
- Pupil's progress from their starting points in history was weak in 2017. Leaders have taken decisive action to remedy this issue. They have employed a new, qualified teacher for history. The full impact of this has yet to be seen.

School details

Unique reference number	103586
DfE registration number	330/6078
Inspection number	10038825

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 school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jami Mosque and Islamic Centre
Trustee in charge	Nurul Haque
Headteacher	Abdul Jalil Shaikh
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,500 to £2,700
Telephone number	0121 688 6507
Website	NA
Email address	contact@darulloom.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–15 October 2015

Information about this school

- Darul Uloom Islamic High School is an independent Muslim faith school providing full-time education.
- It provides an Islamic and secular education to boys from a range of cultural backgrounds, all of whom are practising Muslims.
- The school is co-located with the Jami Mosque, though it operates as a separate site during school time and has separate governance arrangements.
- The school does not use any alternative educational provision.

- There are no pupils who are recorded to have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about this inspection

- Compliance with the independent school standards was established through a site check, analysis of school records and scrutiny of a wide range of documentation, including that about pupils' safety and well-being. The school's admissions and attendance registers and a range of documentation about safeguarding were analysed.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, a group of teachers and pupils. They evaluated the role and impact of the trustee in charge through a phone call to the trustee and the consultant adviser to the trustee.
- The views of parents were evaluated through analysis of 11 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View free-text responses and a meeting with a group of parents.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons across the Islamic and secular curricula, and scrutinised pupils' work in a work sample and in lessons.
- The current progress made by pupils was evaluated through scrutiny of the school's information about the achievement of current pupils and evaluation of the moderation and assessment procedures that leaders use.

Inspection team

Dan Owen, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tim Hill

Her Majesty's Inspector

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