

Al Jamiatul Islamiyah

Mount St Joseph's Convent, Willows Lane, Deane, Bolton Lancashire BL3 4HF

Inspection dates

17–19 April and 1 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including trustees, are at a relatively early stage in developing a fully systematic approach to monitoring the school's secular learning. There is little formal evaluation of the school's effectiveness, including of boarding. Leadership of the secular curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Attainment in English lags behind that in other secular subjects. This reflects variability in the quality of English teaching.
- Record-keeping about boarding pupils is not systematic enough.
- Some employment references accepted by the school lack detail. The admissions register and records of employment checks on staff were not fully accurate at the start of the inspection.
- There is currently a dispute about aspects of the work of trustees and other leaders within parts of the school's wider community.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has a positive ethos which reflects its Islamic background.
- Pupils' attainment in Islamic studies, mathematics and science is high. Examination results in secular subjects are improving.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful of their peers and adults. Older pupils support younger pupils and provide strong role models for them.
- The sixth form provides continuity in Islamic studies as pupils move through the school.
- Boarding pupils are looked after well. They feel safe and see the school as a second home. The school meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools and the independent school standards.
- The school has improved over time.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

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

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of leadership, by:
 - ensuring that arrangements are made to provide for permanent senior leadership of all aspects of the school's work
 - ensuring that leaders and trustees develop an even sharper view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and use this to help them to drive improvement
 - implementing a more systematic approach to the leadership of secular subjects, ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to provide for regular monitoring of the quality of pupils' work and achievement
 - further developing the recently introduced computer-based system for tracking pupils' achievement
 - reviewing and developing the secular curriculum to ensure that pupils learn and achieve equally well in different subjects.
- Further build on the opportunities provided by the recent changes to the membership and approach of the board of trustees to:
 - increase strategic oversight, particularly to the secular education
 - give trustees increased confidence in their review of the school's systems, including its website and policy statements
 - ensure that statutory records about pupils and staff are up to date and kept accurately
 - use the independent school standards and national minimum standards as tools to support their monitoring of the school's effectiveness.
- Raise the consistency and quality of English teaching so that improvement in English attainment speeds up to match that in other secular subjects.
- To improve boarding, ensure that:
 - leaders improve the overall standard of record keeping about boarders, including about their progress and any welfare concerns, to ensure that it stands up to future scrutiny
 - when references on staff are received, leaders check carefully that all specific questions have been answered satisfactorily and that all dates of previous employment are clarified
 - senior leaders and trustees develop and improve the quality of the systems in place to monitor boarding students' welfare.
- Ensure that the continuing dispute about the trustee arrangements among members of the trust board over time are resolved as quickly as possible, while keeping the interests of pupils uppermost.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
The effectiveness of leaders and managers in the boarding provision	Requires improvement
How well children and young people are helped and protected in the boarding provision	Good

- Senior leaders show dedication and commitment. They have created a school culture which values pupils and their learning. In addition, and consistent with the school's Islamic principles, there is a strong sense of welcome and respect for others. Leaders' expectations about pupils' behaviour and learning are high, although these have not led to the highest possible outcomes in English.
- Leaders understand how the school works and how successful it is; however, this evaluation is informal. The lack of detailed and recorded self-evaluation limits leaders' systematic planning for improvement, particularly of secular learning. Despite this, there have been significant improvements over time, for example to the premises and in developing systems to track pupils' achievement in Islamic and secular subjects.
- The roles and responsibilities of senior leaders are changing. Trustees are considering the best arrangements for the future leadership of the school. The previous headteacher, who was responsible for secular education and the sixth form, left the school earlier this academic year. Senior leaders and trustees took the decision to ask other leaders to cover these responsibilities in the short term. While this arrangement has allowed the school to continue its provision in these areas, these leaders do not have the specialist skills needed to further develop the secular curriculum nor to rapidly address the continuing weaknesses in teaching, learning and pupils' achievement in English. There are few checks on the effectiveness of teaching in the secular subjects. This means that leaders are not able to ensure that pupils' work is appropriate in its content or challenge.
- The school met the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding by the end of the inspection. However, leaders made a number of changes including completing additional checks on the suitability of all staff now involved in leading the secular curriculum, and ensuring that the admissions register and single central record of employment checks were completely accurate. In addition, leaders arranged for a number of maintenance issues to be properly addressed.
- Pupils complete Islamic study each morning and have a timetable of secular education each afternoon. The school day is longer than found in many schools. This allows leaders to ensure that pupils receive a suitably broad experience of both faith and secular education. As well as studying English and mathematics, pupils have lessons in science, computing, Urdu, humanities and creative studies. There is an extensive library of religious texts and a smaller library of suitable novels and information books in English available to pupils.
- The school encourages pupils to have an informed but respectful approach towards others. Leaders ensure that pupils hear national and international news daily and have access to newspapers. Leaders encourage debate and discussion about sensitive topics. This is part of the background to the strength of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. It also supports pupils in their understanding of values such as individual liberty and British law. Pupils are aware of risks they could face, including of coming into contact with extremism. The education pupils receive and their daily living out of the school's faith principles give them resilience to counter any such extreme views.

- The members of staff who shared their views using Ofsted's survey were very positive about the school and felt that it is improving.
- Boarding managers share other leaders' commitment towards continuing improvement. For example, the school has provided suitable training to allow staff who have direct responsibilities for boarders to achieve qualifications linked to caring for young people and their welfare. In addition, leaders encourage and facilitate training for senior students, some of whom take on responsibilities for supporting younger students. This includes safeguarding training.
- The boarding managers take an active approach to developing boarding provision. Their enthusiasm to do this is reflected in the links made with other schools to allow good practice to be shared. Boarding pupils are positive about their experience.

Governance

- Members of the board of trustees have a variety of experience. The board includes some trustees who have held responsibility since the school opened and others who have been appointed much more recently. The board meets monthly and considers matters such as the school's finances, staffing matters and safeguarding. They have recently introduced systems to ensure that governance is open and systematic. For example, they now require clear audit trails and accountability for the school's expenditure.
- The trustees are honest in recognising that they are still developing their approach. This has helped them to identify where they need to seek training and support for themselves and school leaders. They have ensured that the school has the support of the headteacher of another Islamic faith school during the current transitions in leadership at Al Jamiatul Islamiyah.
- Trustees have recently increased their scrutiny and challenge concerning pupils' achievement and the curriculum. However, this is at an early stage in regard to the secular curriculum. While planned, trustees have not yet had training about how they can use the school's electronic system for tracking pupils' attainment to understand pupils' progress. Trustees' scrutiny in the past has not ensured that pupils do as well as possible in English.
- Inspectors were made aware that there is a continuing dispute between some past and present members of the board of trustees, also involving others who are in the school's wider community. Trustees, leaders and staff, as well as others who have an interest in the school, have been directly or indirectly affected by this dispute. It is important that the concerns are settled as quickly as possible so that the school's focus can remain on providing the best possible education and care for its pupils.
- At the start of this inspection, a number of students aged over 21 attended the school. Such students are older than the maximum age registered for the school with the Department for Education (DfE). The school has required these students to leave the school until the DfE has agreed that its age range can be extended.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders organise suitable training for staff about aspects such as extremism, child sexual exploitation and first aid. This training allows them to understand their responsibilities and to be confident should they need to respond to any concerns. The school's strong culture of safeguarding is extended further because senior students are also expected, and trained, to be aware of potential risks.
- The safeguarding policy is readily available on the school's website.
- The procedures leaders use to check new members of staff and older students help to protect pupils from coming into contact with unsuitable adults. However, the single central record of these checks contained some administrative errors at the start of the inspection. Leaders addressed these errors satisfactorily during the inspection. Leaders and trustees understand the importance of such records and have learned from taking their remedial action. Leaders also recognise that requiring more detailed references from previous employers would make their systems more robust. The school's health and safety procedures, for example about fire safety, also contribute to pupils being as safe as possible.
- All pupils spoken to by inspectors in the school and the boarding accommodation confirmed that they feel safe in the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- While teaching in Islamic studies, mathematics and science helps pupils to learn well and be successful, this is not the case in English and some other secular subjects. This less effective teaching has meant that pupils' results in English have lagged behind other subjects.
- Teaching in mathematics and English is improving. Over time, the school's results in GCSE examinations have improved, although the rate of improvement in English is slower than in mathematics.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations. They use their strong subject knowledge to set work which challenges and interests pupils. Teachers stretch pupils' knowledge and understanding through the questions they ask and teachers create opportunities for pupils to learn from others. In contrast, where teachers' own knowledge or confidence in how they can inspire pupils is less secure, expectations are much lower. The work teachers set is sometimes too easy. For example, inspectors saw pupils studying English in Year 10 considering simple examples of different types of text; work of the difficulty seen would typically be covered in a primary school.
- Leaders and teachers have introduced more rigorous approaches to assessing pupils. They link the content of Islamic studies to a numerical scale to help them judge how well pupils are learning. In addition, they have recently introduced a computer-based system to allow staff to record and look for patterns in pupils' continuing achievement. This is still at an early stage of its development but there are signs that it is allowing teachers to have a better understanding of how well pupils are progressing. However, such information is not used systematically when teachers plan what pupils are to learn. This means that it is harder for teachers to identify gaps in pupils' understanding and ensure that these are addressed.

- Much of the Islamic curriculum does not rely on pupils' own writing. In the secular curriculum, the quality and quantity of writing varies markedly between subjects. In science, work seen in Year 9 pupils' books demonstrated a commitment of the teacher and pupils to work hard and so develop a strong grasp of the difficult and complex ideas being covered. This commitment was also reflected in pupils' neat and tidy presentation. In contrast, pupils' presentation in English books is generally much poorer and some contained examples of work which was inappropriate or was not in line with the school's wider expectations.
- While school policy identifies that pupils' work should be on display, teachers do not routinely provide examples to demonstrate and celebrate excellent pieces of pupils' work nor to give helpful information for pupils to refer to as they learn.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff, including those responsible for boarding, know pupils well as individuals. The school is characterised by the supportive and open relationships between all members of the school community. Staff and older students provide positive role models for younger pupils.
- Pupils are happy to be in the boarding environment which helps to create a warm and relaxing atmosphere around the campus out of school hours.
- The pupils who spoke to inspectors said that pupils behave well in the school and that bullying is absent. Pupils are aware of the possible types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying. Pupils have no access to mobile phones when they are at school or boarding and access to unsuitable websites is restricted on the school's computer system. Staff also ensure that pupils develop the skills and awareness needed to reduce the risks associated with the misuse of electronic communication.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly supported by the faith ethos of the school. However, teachers and leaders do not assume that this will develop without planned activity. For example, pupils have recently discussed how equality between people who have different protected characteristics is essential. The school provides opportunities for pupils to link with others in the wider community through charitable and sporting activities.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is calm and peaceful. Inspectors saw pupils behaving well in lessons and during their social time during the school day and when boarding. Pupils move about the school with consideration so as not to disturb others. They are positive about their school and understand its high expectations about their conduct. Pupils are courteous, considerate and helpful to each other, to visitors and staff.
- On occasion, when teaching is not demanding enough, some pupils lose concentration in lessons and therefore become inattentive. In lessons where teachers' expectations are

high, pupils try very hard and focus on learning.

- While pupils are highly respectful to other people, they do not always show the same respect for school property. For example, there are examples of graffiti in some places around the school and the doors to some lockers have been damaged. Boarding rooms are, however, tidy and well looked after by pupils.
- Pupils attend school regularly and attendance rates are above those found in many schools. This reflects pupils' keenness to be in school as well as the close contact staff have with parents and carers if pupils are not in school as expected.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils make rapid progress in Islamic studies, mathematics and science, reflecting the effective teaching in these subjects. Progress in other subjects, including English and humanities, is slower.
- Leaders have refined the system to provide information about pupils' achievement in Islamic studies. The records held by the school indicate that classes make gains as they move through the school and that, overall, pupils' achievement in Islamic studies is rising.
- Year 11 pupils' attainment in mathematics and science at GCSE is typically above the national average. However, results are much lower in English. While many pupils speak English as an additional language and some enter the school with English skills below those typically seen for pupils of their age, the school does not do enough to lift pupils' achievement in English. Even though GCSE results in mathematics and English have improved over time, the rate of improvement in English is less than in mathematics, so the gap between these results is increasing.
- The progress of current pupils in secular subjects across the school has a similar variability to the final results achieved by Year 11 pupils. Sometimes this is limited by the narrow content of the subjects studied, for example in humanities in Year 7 where books showed that pupils had concentrated on considering their own learning style rather than covering relevant content, for example about geography or history.
- Leaders and teachers are committed to improving pupils' reading. Using a model from a partner school in the state-funded sector, staff and pupils are expected to stop all other activity and read an English book once a week. Leaders have identified that this is adding to pupils' reading skills and so have extended this to a similar activity to support reading in Arabic. Pupils borrow English books from the library and there is additional provision for boarders to borrow books about the Islamic faith in Arabic and English.

Sixth form provision

Good

- The sixth form is closely integrated into the work and learning programmes of the school. Many sixth-form students continue their Islamic studies from earlier in the school. Some stay on at school over the age of 18 to further build on their Islamic education. For example, those who have completed the Hifz (memorisation of the Koran) course earlier in the school may go on to study the Alim (Islamic theology) programme, or vice versa.
- School records indicate that students continue to learn effectively in their study as sixth-

form students. Nearly all students complete their sixth-form programmes.

- In addition to their study at Al Jamiatul Islamiyah, students of normal sixth-form age are registered as part-time students at Bolton College. This allows them to continue their secular education as they take vocational, BTEC, qualifications together with a retake programme in English for those who have not gained a high enough GCSE grade. Leaders at both institutions ensure that there is close contact about the attendance, behaviour, effort and success of these students. The college's records indicate that students from the school continue the very good conduct and hard work they demonstrate in the school. This helps them to learn rapidly and gain strong final results. The college has identified target grades of distinction or distinction+ for many of these students. The college's assessment data indicates that many are on track to achieve these high grades.
- As part of the college's commitment that all of its sixth-form students should complete the required 16 to 19 study programmes, students are offered work experience. This is planned to match students' interests and links to their BTEC study in business or computing. The work experience adds to the effective advice and guidance provided by the school about possible employment or opportunities for further study, including at university.
- While there is currently no single leader with specific overall responsibility for the sixth form, the integration of sixth-form work into the whole school and careful liaison with Bolton College means that this is having little if any significant immediate impact on the learning or welfare of students.
- Sixth-form students behave well. They support staff by helping younger pupils and by providing clear examples of the standards and values expected by the school.

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people in the boarding provision **Good**

- Boarding is accepted as an integral part of school life. Trustees' continued investment into the rolling programme of refurbishment is improving the environment for boarders.
- Boarding pupils are proud of their school. They spoke positively to inspectors about how the staff look after them. Boarders demonstrate good powers of self-discipline and show respect towards others.
- Boarders' already good behaviour has been further improved with the introduction of a system to recognise and reward good behaviour.
- A significant area of improvement since the previous boarding inspection is in the organisation, implementation and recording of the 'buddy' system. Senior students take pride in helping and supporting pupils new to the school. This system is well integrated into the general induction programme. Feedback from students new to the school about all aspects of induction are positive.
- The school is making good links with other boarding schools and educational facilities. These are helping to widen and develop practice. All those involved demonstrate a good commitment towards community integration in activities planned specifically for boarding pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	130285
Social care unique reference number	SC009423
DfE registration number	350/6017
Inspection number	10043780

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. 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.

Type of school	Independent Islamic faith school
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 21
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	58
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	135
Proprietor	Trustees of the Al-Jamiatul Islamiyah Darul Uloom, Lancashire, U.K.
Chair	Ismail Mohammed Ali
Headteacher	Suhail Master
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,500
Annual fees (boarders)	£2,800
Telephone number	01204 62622
Website	www.boltondarululoom.org
Email address	darululoombolton@yahoo.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–10 March 2016

Information about this school

- Al Jamiatul Islamiyah was established in 1993 and is an independent boys' day and boarding school with a clear Islamic ethos and religious purpose. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language. The majority are British Muslims of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage, although some attend the school from other European countries.
- The school's stated mission is 'to motivate, inspire, educate and rekindle the spark within the hearts of those youth who are growing up within this country. It aims to provide both religious and secular education to Muslims in an environment which is conducive to their learning and spiritual being'.
- Leadership of the faith and secular education in the school is separate. The headteacher, who held leadership responsibility for the secular curriculum and the sixth form, left the school earlier this school year. The secular curriculum is led, on an interim basis, by a team of members of staff.
- The curriculum comprises Islamic studies, which are taught in the morning, and a secular curriculum, taught in the afternoon. The Islamic curriculum includes Koranic exegesis, Arabic literature, hadith, theology and jurisprudence, as well as the study of Arabic. The secular curriculum is taught in English.
- Sixth-form students are registered as part-time students at Bolton College. They receive secular education in vocational subjects at the college. The quality of this provision is inspected by Ofsted as part of inspection of the college.
- Currently, there are no pupils at the school with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors toured the school site, accompanied by the executive principal, and the boarding accommodation, accompanied by the executive principal and the boarding managers.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in the Islamic and secular curriculum across the school. Inspectors observed pupils' conduct in lessons, during movement between lessons, during their social time in school and, for boarders, before and after the school day.
- Inspectors held meetings with the principal, who is also the head of boarding. Inspectors also met with trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees, and a group of teachers. They met formally with groups of pupils during school and boarding activities. They spoke to others during lessons, at other times during the school day and to boarders, during the evening and at breakfast time.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books during lessons and in a scrutiny of samples of pupils' written work in English and other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed documents to confirm compliance with the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding and to provide other inspection evidence. These documents included policies, health and safety records and other safeguarding information, the school's own evaluation of examination results, minutes of meetings, and the attendance and admissions registers. Inspectors examined the school's website.
- No responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were received over the inspection period. Inspectors received 31 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors had telephone conversations with a small number of members of the school's wider community and were sent additional documentary evidence about the school. Inspectors considered the views expressed and documents provided during the main inspection and in a further visit to the school to gather additional evidence, undertaken by the lead inspector.

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