

# Darul Uloom London

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

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.<sup>3, 4</sup>

## Information about the school

Darul Uloom is an Islamic boarding school in Chislehurst, Kent, for students aged from 11 to 20. All students are boarders. There are 150 students on roll; none has a statement of special educational needs. A very few students are at an early stage of learning English though many are bilingual. The school aims to provide '.....high quality Islamic and secular education for the Muslim community...'. High importance is placed in developing students to be '....great scholars and Huffaz...'.

The school's last inspection, in May 2011, was a combined boarding and education inspection and included scrutiny of aspects of the school's provision which had been identified in earlier inspections as requiring significant improvement. While identifying some improvements, the inspection in May 2011 judged that there were still some remaining concerns, mainly about the school's provision for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of its students. Regulatory failures therefore remained, including non-compliance with some national minimum standards for boarding.

## Evaluation of the school

Darul Uloom London is an improving school that provides an overall satisfactory education for its students. The overall effectiveness of boarding is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but Islamic studies are a strength. Students develop into confident young people. Arrangements for safeguarding students and for ensuring their welfare, health and safety are satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school now meets all the regulations. Two minimum standards relating to the administration of medicines and training for senior boarding

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<sup>1</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents).

<sup>2</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents).

<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents).

<sup>4</sup> [www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

staff are not met. Despite the remaining weaknesses, this represents good progress since the last inspection.

## **Quality of education**

The curriculum remains satisfactory overall but has improved since the last inspection.

The curriculum for Islamic studies is good and students make good progress overall as exemplified by one young student who gave a high quality recitation from the Qu'ran during an assembly. Islamic studies, Nahwa (Arabic Grammar), Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), Tafseer (Translation of Qur'an,) Aqaid (fundamental beliefs), Tajweed (Qur'an pronunciation and recitation) and Hadith (traditional sayings) enable students not only to successfully develop their theological understanding of Islam but also to gain good language skills in Urdu and Arabic. Students achieve well in these studies at GCSE.

The Islamic curriculum, prayers and assemblies enable students to consider well their own personal development and lifestyles and this contributes effectively to their understanding of appropriate moral and social behaviour.

The secular curriculum includes National Curriculum subjects and religious education. There are schemes of work for all subjects. There is an appropriate focus on the key areas of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum enables students to take GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, Arabic and Urdu. Physical education (PE), history, art, personal, health and social education (PSHE) and citizenship comprise the remaining secular curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection. PE now provides students with regular physical activity. At the time of the inspection, students were enjoying a series of football lessons. Younger students were pleased with their improving skills of ball control. The history and citizenship schemes of work have improved students' understanding and knowledge of British history, culture and traditions and have recently led to lessons about slavery, castles and the importance of enquiry skills in developing independence and problem solving. Overall, therefore, the range of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection.

Extra-curricular and enrichment provision is more limited and an area of development for the school. Some parents and carers indicated that they would like to see more educational visits. Evening activities for students involve homework and light recreational activities, for example, table tennis and meeting socially with friends. Although there is no established range of clubs, students are happy with their evening activities and the chance to relax after a long day of study. Students undertake some educational visits, most recently to the science museum and a local church. There are satisfactory opportunities for work experience, for example in a local hospital, and there are suitable arrangements in place for a visiting speaker to provide careers advice.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. The teaching in Islamic studies is stronger than in the secular curriculum. No inadequate teaching and learning were observed during the inspection. Relationships in classrooms are very respectful. A calm atmosphere pervades lessons. Teachers' planning adequately sets out learning objectives and activities. These are usually shared with students at the start of lessons. The content of lessons suitably reflects the longer-term schemes of work which are available for all subjects. However, pitching the level of work to meet the needs of the various abilities of students is not firmly embedded in all lesson planning.

Question-and-answer sessions successfully help to draw out ideas from students and help teachers to assess what they know. There are some good examples, in both the Islamic and secular lessons, of students working together, but there are missed opportunities to increase this type of activity. Teachers are very supportive of their students and give appropriate encouragement and praise for their efforts. The pace of learning is sometimes not sustained in lessons and this can lead to a hiatus in activity and a lack of challenge for some students.

The use of assessment is well established in Islamic studies and students' achievements are carefully monitored. Teachers have very good knowledge of how students are performing overall. The formal assessment of students' performance in National Curriculum subjects is at an early stage of development, though students were able to talk to inspectors about the levels at which they were working and said that teachers had given them information about the requirements of each level. The school is not in a position to make clear judgements about the rate at which individual students are making progress in National Curriculum subjects. Teachers' marking is not systematically correcting literacy errors, such as spelling, across the curriculum. Marking is inconsistent and does not always follow the school policy, though there are some good examples of written comments to help students improve their work next time.

All boarding and teaching staff know the students well. Additional support is given when required. Learning support teachers and boarding staff are increasingly successful in helping students develop confidence to overcome difficulties though there is a lack of sufficiently detailed assessment on the specific learning needs of students who are having difficulties.

Most students start at the school with average or above average abilities in their key skills. They make satisfactory progress overall. Other than their Islamic studies where progress is good, students have most success in mathematics and Arabic where the majority of students reach the higher grades at GCSE. Progress in English is satisfactory. Progress in writing is slower than in reading, speaking and listening. Students are not writing independently often enough and the presentation of their work is untidy.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

The spiritual, moral and social development of students is a clear strength of the school. Through their Islamic studies, PSHE and citizenship lessons, students learn how to behave and interact appropriately and respectfully with others. These themes are successful in developing a real and tangible sense of community which pervades both the boarding and educational aspects of school life. Students talk about being part of a 'family'. The strong Islamic culture and traditions overarch and create the school's caring ethos. Students are happy in school and enjoy their activities. The responses in their returned questionnaires made this clear. Comments such as, 'I really like my school...', 'school leaders have done a good job...'; 'the best school I've been to..', sum up their overall views.

Attendance is satisfactory and behaviour is good. Students are respectful to each other and adults. Assemblies encourage students to be good and helpful citizens and to take pride in themselves and demonstrate exemplary attitudes of courteousness and respect.

The main opportunities for spiritual development come through students' religious activities either in prayer or in Islamic studies where students take particular pride in their achievements. The daily Islamic studies, prayer 'Salaa' and supplication 'Duaa' ensure students develop a good understanding of their religious identity and a sense of knowing what it means to be a Muslim in the modern world. Their cultural knowledge and understanding of other cultures are developing and this is an improvement since the last inspection. This has been achieved through improvements to the curriculum in history and citizenship and also through developing links with other faiths. The school recently hosted students from a Church of England school to exchange views on peace and faith. The recently implemented citizenship programme enables students to study national institutions and issues such as local and national democracy in a wider context. There are suitable plans to develop more personal student links with the wider community.

The good links between boarding and care staff ensure that students' personal development is supported seamlessly between the two aspects of school life. Students say that their boarding experience helps them to develop their social skills, confidence and independence. Through their request at the school council, students have improved their provision, for example, by improving menus and having fresh, cool water available around the boarding houses.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

Provision for ensuring students' welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Senior leaders have been successful in putting

in place procedures and practices that have rectified nearly all the weaknesses previously identified. Procedures for safeguarding students, including the appointment of staff and carrying out the required checks, are satisfactory. Key risk assessments are in place for general health and safety and for fire safety for all parts of the school. A good number of staff have received the higher level training for child protection.

A 'key worker' system enables boarders to spend time with staff on a weekly basis to discuss issues or concerns, though a system to formally record and monitor the outcomes from these discussions is not yet firmly established. Staff consistently encourage good behaviour and sanctions and punishments are rare. Students are very aware of the sanctions and rewards and believe the systems to be fair.

The arrangements for healthcare and the policy have been reviewed and are now satisfactory. In boarding only, there is no recording of the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication. The introduction of regular PE helps to provide appropriate energetic activity and the school has improved its menus to provide a more healthy diet. The school has greatly improved the way in which food is stored and prepared, including students' own food, and now meets the standards required by Environmental Health officers. The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

All appropriate checks and procedures are carried out on staff working in the school and boarding house. The school keeps an appropriate central register of all staff and professionals who attend the school regularly.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

The school has continued to improve the premises and environment of the school and boarding provision. Overall the school is clean and tidy. Students have particular responsibilities to maintain their own rooms in a tidy and clean state and can win awards when this is done to a high standard. The cleanliness of storage facilities has improved and food is now stored hygienically, an area of weakness at the last inspection.

### **Provision of information**

Parents and carers receive all the required information and are made aware of other information that is available on request. Parents and carers who returned questionnaires were all very positive about the school.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school's procedures meet all requirements.

## **Leadership and management of boarding**

The leadership and management of boarding are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A new management structure has been established which includes a new position of head of boarding. Procedures and practices are improving.

Most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been rectified including the significant weaknesses in boarders' welfare, health and safety. Policies have been reviewed and there are now clear, successful arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the boarding arrangements. Senior staff are clearer about their duties. There is now a system of staff supervision and appraisal. School leaders are establishing clearer and more formal roles for some junior staff. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are improved numbers of staff on duty. Some staff have undertaken external training for their role but the head of care is relatively inexperienced and has not as yet completed additional training to comply with the national minimum standard in this respect.

The ethos and activities created by school leaders and other staff promote good outcomes for students who enjoy the good relationships and support they receive, which in turn promote very evident personal development and positive attitudes.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

## **National minimum standards**

In order to meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools and associated regulations the school should:

- implement a more rigorous and robust procedure for recording the administration of prescribed and non-prescribed medication (NM 3.1)
- ensure that the head of care completes appropriate training commensurate with the role (NM 13.2).

## **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 the rigour and accuracy of assessment of the secular curriculum so that it is clear how and at what rate students are progressing in their learning
- ensure that students develop their writing skills systematically across the curriculum and present their work more neatly
- raise the quality of marking and ensure that it is consistent across the school
- increase the range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits including establishing a greater number of opportunities to make links with the local and wider communities.

## 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

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

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Type of school</b>	Boarding school
<b>Date school opened</b>	November 1994
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 – 20 years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	150
<b>Number of boarders</b>	150
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	0
<b>Annual fees (boarders)</b>	£2,700
<b>Address of school</b>	Foxbury Avenue Chiselhurst Kent BR7 6SD
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8295 0637
<b>Email address</b>	Darulubom786@hotmail.com
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mustafa Musa
<b>Proprietor</b>	Darul Uloom London

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.

3 November 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Darul Uloom, Chislehurst, BR7 6SD**

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly into your school. You told us how much you enjoyed being at school. This was evident from the strong and respectful community that we experienced during the inspection. Your behaviour is good. We enjoyed taking part in the assembly where you were presented with awards.

We found that your school is improving. Senior leaders have tackled nearly all the areas that the previous inspection found needed changing. There are now a number of new procedures in place to improve the management of the school, especially to help ensure that you are kept safe and healthy. These need to be fully implemented and checked regularly. We have asked that procedures to check how and when medicines are given out are improved and to ensure that all senior staff have appropriate training.

Overall, you are making satisfactory progress in your learning. Most of you make good progress in your Islamic studies. Progress in other subjects is satisfactory. You speak and listen well but your writing is not as good as it should be. We think you could do better in trying to make your written work neater in all subjects and more accurate. We have asked the teachers to check this more regularly.

We want school leaders to make sure that teachers are checking more carefully to see how much progress you are all making and then making sure that lessons are helping you to make even more progress. We would like you all to have a greater range of after-school activities and to make more educational visits.

Thank you very much for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and observing you at work.

Daniel Towl  
Her Majesty's Inspector