

Darul Uloom

Holcombe Hall, 149 Holcombe Old Road, Holcombe, Bury, Lancashire BL8 4NG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Darul Uloom Al Arabiya Al Islamiya is an independent boarding school for boys providing Islamic studies and secondary education. The school caters for pupils of secondary school age as well as senior pupils.

The boarding accommodation is located on the school site, within the main building. Currently the school has a total of 288 pupils, 118 who are day pupils and 170 who board.

The boarding provision was last inspected in March 2017 with the education provision being inspected in March 2018.

Inspection dates: 30 April to 2 May 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	inadequate
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	inadequate
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	inadequate
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There are serious and widespread failures, which mean that children and young people are not protected and their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded.

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2017

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: inadequate

Leaders and staff provide effective support for pupils in the school. Pupils told the inspectors that they value the relationships that they have with each other and with their staff. Relationships between the pupils and staff are positive, and are built on trust and mutual respect. Pupils make educational progress beyond initial expectations. They enjoy their learning and have aspirations for their future.

Feedback from pupils and their parents is extremely positive and demonstrates the value that they put on the school. For example, they feel that the Islamic studies combined with the national curriculum constitute an area of strength. There is a strong emphasis placed on education and parents feel that the pupils' boarding experience enhances their confidence, self-esteem and learning. Inspectors found no written evidence to suggest that the pupils confidence, self-esteem and learning are enhanced by their boarding experience.

Inspectors found serious safeguarding shortfalls in the areas of fire protection, medication, pupils' accommodation, and leadership and management. This means that the pupils who board at the school are at serious risk of harm and their welfare is not supported effectively. These shortfalls have been caused by the lack of leadership in the boarding provision. There has been no action to address these shortfalls or their cause.

For boarding pupils with health needs or allergies, health plans and risk assessments are weak. The risk assessments for pupils do not provide boarding staff with clear guidance on how to identify, mitigate and manage risks. The pupil's health plans lack correct information, particularly around foods which cause allergies. For example, the foods pupils must avoid as recorded in their health plans are different from the food's pupils must avoid as recorded on the critical medical conditions list displayed in the staff office.

Staff are unsure of the actions to take when pupils have food allergies and some staff have not had Epi-Pen training. These pupils share bedrooms where food may be eaten. This can increase the risk of an allergic reaction, particularly as the staff have a negligent attitude and limited knowledge around the safe management of and response to pupils with allergies. Environmental controls are not in place to reduce these risks. Staff do not routinely check the medications that pupils bring from home. A lack of clear risk assessments, health plans, staff training and understanding and staff not following policies places pupils at risk of serious illness or fatality.

Pupils are involved in decision-making and they can effect change. The student council meets regularly, and its members represent the pupils' voice. Some changes have occurred because of these forums, such as, new floodlights for the outside

football area. Pupils have access to a suggestion box and the leader's responses are displayed on the 'you said, we did' notice board.

Pupils access to information about complaints or independent bodies is limited. During conversations with the inspectors, pupils were unsure of the role of independent organisations, such as Ofsted and Childline. Inspectors advised the pupils that these organisations are points of contact should they wish to raise a concern with someone independent of the school.

The pupils told inspectors that they enjoy the social opportunities available to them at school. These include, but are limited to, football, cricket, ping-pong and board games, and occasional trips further afield. Smart phones are not allowed in the school and the boarding accommodation. However, pupils are allowed basic mobile phones and have access to radios. Pupils do not have regular access to the Internet, television, newspapers or popular new reading books.

Younger pupils who go outside of the school grounds to the local shops are accompanied by a staff member or a prefect. Pupils are not involved in local clubs in the community. Staff do not regularly review and re-assess risk to ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities to have more freedom as they grow and develop new skills. These arrangements restrict the pupil's independence.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: inadequate

The school has a policy for staff to self-disclose incidents. Leaders rely on all staff completing the annual declaration form to declare that their conduct outside of school has been appropriate. There is a policy for staff to self-disclose incidents. During the inspection, an incident outside of school was brought to the attention of leaders who took appropriate action.

Health and safety procedures and fire prevention are poor. The school uses a private fire contractor who has provided the leaders with an assessment recommending a better fire alarm system. The current fire alarm system does not show where in the building the fire has occurred. This has not been acted upon. Inspectors identified an electrical box which was not secured. This was addressed at the inspection and the box was made secure and safe. Fire doors for the pupils' bedrooms, although purchased, have not been fitted. Fire evacuation drills for pupils and staff have not been completed in line with the fire procedure for the school.

Local fire officers have visited the school and made recommendations in a report to improve fire safety. Despite several requests, this report was not provided for the inspectors until the last day of the inspection. These shortfalls place pupils, staff and visitors at serious risk of injury or fatality. Inspectors contacted the local fire service and requested that they visit the school as a matter of urgency.

The leaders' approach to keeping pupils safe in relation to abuse, sexual exploitation, bullying and radicalisation ensures that all concerns are met with a quick response.

Concerns about staff practice are given priority. Information is shared immediately and transparently with the designated officer in the local authority. The schools designated safeguarding lead acts swiftly when there are any concerns regarding a pupil or a staff member. Such concerns are reported effectively to parents and relevant professionals in the local authority.

Staff have completed training in 'Keeping children safe in education.' They know their responsibilities to share concerns and they ensure that the protection of pupils from abuse remains relevant and at the forefront of daily practice. There is good partnership working with the local police. They have trained staff in Prevent duty and online safety and they have delivered messages to pupils on safety in a way in which pupils understand.

The boarding pupils told inspectors that they have one-to-one time with staff to explore their feelings. They spoke with passion about the way in which the support from staff has enabled them to settle in, change their behaviours and become better citizens. Pupils consistently described the school as being, 'one big happy family.' Pupils told the inspectors that they feel safe and that they never feel they are being intimidated or subjected to bullying.

No pupils have gone missing from the school or the boarding provision. The staff understand the procedure to follow should such an incident occur. Pupils behave well in school and in the boarding provision. The staff have not had to use physical intervention.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: inadequate

The leadership and governance of the school and boarding provision are poor. The headteacher is responsible for the school and the boarding provision. The leaders do not consistently fulfil their responsibilities as this inspection identified that 15 national minimum standards are unmet.

The school's prospectus is available to parents. Inspectors were told that these documents are revised and updated regularly. The current format does not provide the information required by regulation. Details of the complaint's procedure and details of where to access copies of the reports on any inspections that have been carried out are not included in the schools prospectus.

Leaders provide staff with support through supervision, team meetings and appraisals. However, the supervision records for the staff are poor. These records do not provide an opportunity for staff to engage in critical reflection to develop their skills. There are no records of discussion that take place during team meetings. Records of the staffs appraisals contain no evaluation of practice, no objectives set for the following year and no views of the boarding pupils.

Boarding pupils are not appropriately supervised during the evening and through the

night. Two staff respond to the 170 boarding pupils needs during the evening, with only one staff member available through the night. Prefects make up this shortfall in staffing and they are relied on for their support. These arrangements can impact on the prefect's welfare and mean that they are not safe.

Trustees undertake visits to the school and report on their findings. However, the reports do not detail all the shortfalls identified during this inspection. Consequently, the trustees monitoring reports do not show the actions taken by leaders when issues are raised. There are no clear lines of accountability. The trustees' reports do not show an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and they are ineffective in holding leaders to account.

Records relating to boarding pupils are not sufficient and they are poorly maintained. Poor record keeping is a common weakness that was seen throughout this inspection.

Boarding care plans are not in place, and there are no evaluations or progress reports regarding boarding pupils' social, emotional or welfare achievements. Progress reports sent to parents only include information on education. Staff verbally told the inspectors of the progress that boarding pupils make in relation to their social, emotional or welfare needs. However, leaders and staff could not back this up with clear written evidence.

The boarding accommodation is of poor quality and is unsafe. The pupils' bedrooms have not been maintained to an acceptable standard. Carpets are worn; paintwork is scratched; there is graffiti; ceilings are damaged; doors are broken; and broken windows are boarded up. This would have a significant affect on the safety of the boarding pupils in the event of a fire. Furthermore, their bedrooms are dirty, creating a health risk.

Although leaders recognise these shortfalls and have sought quotations, they have failed to act and make the required improvements.

The toilets and washing facilities for boarding pupils aged 16 and over are closed and in need of repair. Pupils must walk across a landing and go downstairs to use the toilet and washing facilities that are working. The bedrooms for pupils who are under 16 are shared, do not have privacy screens and provide pupils with little space for personalisation. Pupils told inspectors that they have to leave their bedroom when someone is getting changed. These arrangements seriously compromise the boarding pupil's privacy.

What does the boarding school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:

- 1.1 A suitable statement of the school's boarding principles and practice is available to parents and staff, is made known to boarders, and is seen to work in practice.
- 3.1 The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of boarders who are unwell and ensures that the physical and mental health, and emotional wellbeing of boarders is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies and the use of household remedies.
- 5.2 Suitable living accommodation is provided for boarders for the purposes of organised and private study outside school hours and for social purposes.
- 5.4 Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility.
- 5.5 Accommodation is suitably furnished and of sufficient size for the number, needs and ages of boarders accommodated, with appropriate protection and separation between genders, age groups and accommodation for adults. Bedding is clean and suitable, and is sufficiently warm.
- 6.3 The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 7.2 In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'boarding time'.
- 10.4 Boarders have access to information about events in the world outside the school, and access to local facilities which are appropriate to their age.
- 13.1 The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary.
- 13.2 There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff.
- 13.4 The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met.
- 13.8 The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate.
- 15.1 Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives

induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding.

- 15.3 The staff supervising boarders outside teaching time are sufficient in number, training and experience for the age, number and needs of boarders, and the locations and activities involved.
- 17.1 Boarders are actively encouraged to contribute views to the operation of boarding provision, are able to raise concerns and make complaints, and their views are given appropriate weight in decisions about the running of the school. Boarders are not penalised for raising a concern or making a complaint in good faith.

Recommendations

- There is an appropriate range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day. Suitable risk assessments are in place for any activities which may put boarders at risk of harm.
- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the 'Social care common inspection framework'. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Boarding school details

Social care unique reference number: SC008476

Headteacher: Mohamed Mulla

Type of school: Boarding School

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Inspectors

Mark Kersh, social care inspector (lead)

Sarah Billett, social care inspector

Elaine Clare, social care inspector



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