

Inspection of Dar-Ul-Madinah

Granville Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 6HD

Inspection dates: 12–14 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Teachers' expectations of pupils are too low in a number of areas of learning. As a result, pupils' achievement is poor. Pupils 'switch off' from their learning because they feel bored. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in phonics. Pupils' work in subjects such as art and geography is insubstantial. These subjects are not given enough attention. All of this has been made worse by staffing problems at the start of Reception Year, where children have got off to a slow start in their learning.

Pupils like this small school. They feel happy and safe because they are cared for well by staff. Parents and carers value the sense of community at the school.

Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school. This is because of the effective way in which the headteacher deals with rare incidents of more serious behaviour. This helps pupils to enjoy their school experience. However, pupils talk over staff in class. Staff do not address this well enough. This spoils pupils' otherwise good conduct.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher and teachers are working hard to turn the school around. However, they have not shown that they can. There are a number of unmet independent school standards. These are mainly to do with the quality of education and the quality of leadership and management.

Leaders do not see to it that teachers carry out the school's curriculum policy well across the school. Pupils learn best in mathematics, writing and design technology. These subjects build well on what pupils have done before. For example, when Year 1 pupils designed a purse, they followed the processes of designing, making and reviewing their work. However, there are not many examples of this sort. Other subjects stand in stark contrast to this. Staff have not thought carefully enough about what they want pupils to learn in the topics that they study. In subjects such as geography and history, pupils learn disconnected facts. This makes learning meaningless. There are a number of unmet independent school standards to do with the curriculum. This is because leaders do not put plans in place that develop pupils' understanding of human and social aspects of their learning sufficiently well.

The curriculum aims that teachers set for pupils' learning are not ambitious. Teachers cover some subjects too briefly to be able to develop pupils' knowledge and skills. We found that there are too few opportunities to develop pupils' learning in human and social education, as well as their creative education. The curriculum is too limited. Where teachers have made useful links in pupils' learning, the quality of their work is better. Pupils' science work includes some strong elements of mathematics, such as measurement when conducting experiments. In other work, pupils' knowledge about materials was linked well with design technology. Teachers asked them to find the right material for designing an umbrella. Pupils do not do enough work to develop their skills. This means that there are unmet independent school standards.

Leaders are aware that learning in the school is not as good as it should be, particularly in phonics. The approach to learning sounds is not consistent between classes. Many children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 do not use phonics as well as they should. The books that pupils read do not match their stage of development well enough. The headteacher has put extra phonics support in place for pupils with special educational needs, and the growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is more structured and focused on pupils' learning needs. The support is developing pupils' speech and language faster than other pupils in the school. However, pupils in Year 2 still have gaps in their learning because teaching in the past has not helped them to remember what they have learned. Too many of these pupils lack the fluency that they need to understand the books that they read.

In early years, children have had a disrupted start to their learning. This is because there have been staff changes since the start of the year. This is made worse by the fact that staff do not have high enough expectations for children's learning. Staff accept poor-quality work. Different areas of learning in the classroom have not been thought through. The activities set up for children's independent learning are aimless. They do not help children to know more and remember more. The school does not meet the learning requirements of the early years foundation stage.

Leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of education in the school. This is because the systems to assess pupils' progress are limited to English and mathematics. The headteacher and proprietor are too reliant on the results of tests to judge the quality of pupils' learning. This flawed approach means that leaders have not challenged teaching that does not help pupils to remember what they have learned. The independent school standards relating to the use of assessment have not been met. Teachers cannot work out how successful pupils' learning has been and cannot use this information to build on what pupils know. This means that teachers do not set clear expectations of what pupils should know and remember in some topics and subjects.

Although the school has a behaviour policy, it does not contain the detail that it needs to be helpful to staff. Staff do not consistently address pupils' talking in class. This disrupts pupils' learning. Leaders have not adequately met the standards regarding the good management of behaviour. This is because the policy does not support staff in dealing with low-level disruption to lessons.

Pupils understand the British values of respect and tolerance. Although activities to promote these values are not well planned, leaders have ensured that pupils understand the principles of The Equality Act 2010.

Staff appreciate the thought that the headteacher puts into managing their workload. For example, staff are given daily time to focus on their work outside the classroom and are expected to leave the site by 4pm each day. However, teachers and teaching assistants have not had the training that they need to deliver different parts of the curriculum. This means that they are not effective in helping pupils learn what they need to learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The headteacher has made sure staff have received a range of safeguarding training. All staff have received the most recent guidance for safeguarding. They know pupils well. Pupils feel that they can speak to staff about any problems that they may have.

Pupils have an appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, the Year 1 and Year 2 classroom has an online safety display. It shows pupils' awareness of the dangers of sharing information online. The headteacher works well with other agencies to deal with any areas of concern and to support pupils and their families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Staff work hard for the pupils in their class. They often research aspects of learning for themselves. However, they do not have a clear oversight of what they would like children in early years and pupils in key stage 1 to learn in different subjects and in different topics. They have not been provided with any professional development to deliver the different aspects of the curriculum, including phonics. Leaders should ensure that:
 - staff receive the development that they need to understand and plan different aspects of the curriculum in detail
 - plans for pupils' learning set high expectations for what they want pupils to know, understand and do in each subject
 - the curriculum for each subject is ordered so that it builds on pupils' prior learning
 - pupils' learning in human and social education and aesthetic and creative education is sufficiently covered to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are developed well.
- The assessment of pupils, and children in early years, is not being used well enough to help to develop the quality of pupils' education. Leaders should ensure that assessment systems are based on high expectations for pupils' learning and are used well to check pupils' understanding and inform teachers' planning.
- The proprietor should ensure that the headteacher is provided with appropriate development opportunities for her role so that she can be held to account more closely for the quality of education at the school.
- In early years, staff do not consider the end points in children's learning well enough for each area of learning. This means that children do not learn as well as they should. The proprietor should ensure that staff are provided with the

development that they need to plan meaningful learning in the classroom, so that staff help children to achieve better standards in their work.

- We saw examples of low-level disruption in classes. This prevents pupils from learning well. The headteacher should ensure that the school's behaviour policy is clear on how staff handle low-level disruption in lessons. She should ensure that this is implemented consistently across the school to enable pupils to learn more effectively.

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School details

Unique reference number	142931
DfE registration number	889/6015
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10112083
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Dar-UI-Madinah UK Ltd
Headteacher	Mrs Naheeda Mohammed
Annual fees (day pupils)	£600
Telephone number	01254 262 823
Website	None
Email address	uk@darulmadinah.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–29 May 2018

Information about this school

- Dar-UI-Madinah is an Islamic school that operates from one site in Blackburn. It offers specialist provision for teaching Islamic studies.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place on 22–23 May 2018.
- The school received a subsequent monitoring inspection in January 2019 and underwent a material change inspection in June 2019.
- The school shares a site with a nursery, which is inspected separately.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- All teaching staff are new to the school since the last standard inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- We met with the headteacher and teaching staff about the subjects that they lead throughout the inspection.
- We met with groups of pupils from across the school, both formally and informally, to ask them about safeguarding. We also met with the headteacher, the proprietor's representative, teachers and support staff. We reviewed documentation that included the school's safeguarding policy, the register of checks carried out on new employees, and safeguarding records.
- We looked at the school's behaviour records, observed pupils at breaktimes and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils.
- We spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- We considered reading, mathematics, art and personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in depth as part of this inspection. For these subjects, we spoke with the headteacher, met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. We heard pupils read. We also spoke to two pupils about their work across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work–
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan;
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(b) that pupils acquire speaking, listening, literacy and numeracy skills;
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress;
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school–
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and uses information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;

- 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that–
 - 9(a) a written behaviour policy is drawn up that, amongst other matters, sets out the sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour;
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively;

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently;

The school must meet the following early years learning and development requirements

1.4 Support children in their learning and development in literacy.

1.5 Ensure children have activities and opportunities to develop their communication and language; and literacy development that encourages children to link sounds and letters.

1.6 Use the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all of the areas of learning and development.

1.11 Ensure staff allocated to the early years foundation stage have high expectations of what children can achieve.

2.1 Ensure staff use assessment to understand children's level of achievement and shape learning experiences for each child.

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