

# Darul Uloom London School

Foxbury Avenue, Chislehurst, BR7 6SD

## Inspection dates

2 December 2020

### Overall outcome

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

### Residential provision outcome

**The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

#### *Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b) and 32(1)(c)*

- At the last inspection, the requirements of these paragraphs were met.
- There was a suitable safeguarding policy that reflected the latest guidance and was available to parents. Safeguarding practice had improved. Risk assessments and safeguarding procedures were appropriate. The school had clear procedures to ensure that concerns were investigated, and that staff took prompt and appropriate action. Lessons learned from incidents were used well to improve safeguarding practice.
- Leaders are knowledgeable and can demonstrate effective work with outside agencies to help pupils in need of support. Leaders seek advice from professionals, follow it and keep detailed records. Leaders present as honest and open about safeguarding issues.
- Staff are trained by a range of reputable providers, including the local authority. They can talk about their safeguarding training and how they have applied it. Records confirm the training is up to date. Staff relate easily to the needs and worries of pupils and can explain why things are working better.
- The safeguarding policy is comprehensive and available for parents on the website. The written policy has not yet been updated to reflect the latest guidance, but leaders know the recent changes and follow these in practice.

- The requirements of these paragraphs are met.

#### *Paragraph 8, 8(a) and 8(b)*

- At the time of the last inspection, the requirements of these paragraphs were unmet.
- Leaders had addressed the unacceptable level of responsibility on sixth-form students, who were no longer required to supervise other young people. However, weaknesses

remained in the quality of the accommodation for boarders, which was not maintained to a high enough standard. These weaknesses in the quality of the school environment presented a risk to boarders' welfare.

- In the school's action plan, leaders' proposed actions and timescales were clear and succinct. They were linked directly to the shortcomings identified in the previous inspection report, such as the need for signage for hazardous materials and the removal of disused furniture. The actions were also cross-referenced to the relevant national minimum standards for boarding schools (NMS) that were also unmet (NMS 6.2).
- Pupils say they feel safe. They know who to go to and say that housemasters and boarding staff listen and help them. They think that changes made due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) help them and they have confidence in them. They confirm that the environment has improved and the range of activities and clubs, after school and at weekends, is much better.
- Leaders follow the guidance and make sure all staff, including boarding staff, are suitable and have the required checks. Leaders record the checks correctly.
- Leaders are building a positive culture of safeguarding. They have empathy for pupils and recognise the difficulties which young boarders might face.
- The requirements of these paragraphs are met.

## Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

### *Paragraph 25 and 30*

- At the time of the last full standard inspection there were weaknesses in the maintenance of the boarding accommodation. The accommodation was not routinely cleaned or maintained to a high enough standard. Inspectors found toilets, showers, wash basins and bedrooms to be dirty and to require updating in some places. There were insufficient shower facilities for boarders.
- In the school's action plan, leaders identified suitable actions, timescales and success criteria to meet the standards. These were: a phased programme for the refurbishment of showers and toilets; the need to update risk assessments; and implementing daily premises safety checks. The action plan was cross-referenced to the relevant NMS that were unmet (NMS 5.3 and 5.4).
- Leaders have taken effective action. There is a rolling programme of refurbishment, which has resulted in a cleaner, safer environment. Some showers and toilets in one part of the school have still to be refurbished but these refurbishments are planned. Other weaknesses identified previously have been addressed. Premises checks are detailed, diligently carried out and followed up. Record-keeping is strong.
- The requirements of these paragraphs are met.

## Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

### *Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)*

- At the time of the last standard inspection, these standards were unmet because leaders had not addressed the weaknesses in the boarding accommodation in relation to maintenance and cleanliness. There were also concerns about the capacity of trustees to

maintain oversight of the work of senior leaders. They were not systematic enough in the way they carried out their work.

- In the school's action plan, leaders proposed working with an external consultant. This was to develop and implement a quality assurance process to inform self-evaluation and an external review to improve the quality and impact of governance. The action plan was cross-referenced to the relevant NMS that was unmet (NMS 13.3).
- Leaders have worked with an external consultant and also joined a nationally recognised association of boarding schools as an affiliate member. They acted on advice and set up an independent audit, which is due to be carried out in January 2021.
- However, in the past few weeks there has been a difference of views among the trustees and some, including the chair of trustees, have resigned from the trust board. These events are recent and have not had a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development. The new chair of trustees is recruiting members so that there will be enough trustees to do the work to support the school and hold leaders to account.
- Nevertheless, the school has lost key people who were driving school improvement and so leadership at proprietor level is not secure. At present, it is unclear whether new leaders have the skills and knowledge to lead the school effectively and ensure that all the independent school standards are consistently met.
- The requirements of these paragraphs are not met.

#### Boarding provision

The national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

##### *Standard 5.3, 5.4*

- The school environment is improved, and the school has an ongoing plan for refurbishment. Hazardous areas are now secured. Boarders now benefit from refurbished shower rooms and the programme for refurbishment is ongoing. Boarders are now monitored by an overnight awake staff and the addition of a CCTV system in the corridors and communal areas.
- The school meets these national minimum standards.

##### *Standard 6.2*

- Boarders report that they are happy and feel safe. They enjoy the company of each other and input of boarding staff. Boarders understand who they can turn to if they are distressed or upset.
- Boarders understand procedures for keeping safe and the importance of regular handwashing and social distancing. Boarders say that they were offered regular help and support by staff during the recent lockdown period. This included regular phone contact and access to online education resources.
- The school meets this national minimum standard.

*Standard 10.1, 10.4*

- Leaders have broadened the choice of activities for boarders. Boarders now benefit from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and 20 pupils are working towards their bronze award.
- The choice of increased activities was supported by the student council and is valued by boarders. They appreciate staff's wish to 'think outside the box'. Additional activities include horse riding, astronomy classes and swimming. Boarders spoke of recent trips to the attractions around the London area that they had visited prior to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The school meets these national minimum standards.

*Standard 13.3, 13.4*

- Leaders are eager to improve and develop the school. An independent audit has been commissioned and is planned to take place in January 2021. The audit will be led by a national recognised association for boarding schools provider.
- However, although there have been improvements, recent changes to the board of trustees mean that it is not clear if the proprietor has enough capacity, skills and knowledge to continue to lead and improve the school.
- The school does not meet these national minimum standards.

## School details

Unique reference number	101695
Social care unique reference number	SC0062927
DfE registration number	305/6077
Inspection number	10132946

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 residential 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	Other independent school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	22
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	145
Proprietor	Darul Uloom
Chair	Ismail Maljee
Headteacher	Mufti Mohammed Kamil Sheikh
Annual fees (boarders)	£3,500
Telephone number	020 8295 0637
Website	<a href="http://www.darululoomlondon.co.uk">www.darululoomlondon.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:education@darululoomlondon.com">education@darululoomlondon.com</a>
Date of previous standard inspection	18–20 June 2019

## **Information about this school**

- Darul Uloom London is an independent boarding school for boys. It is registered for 155 pupils aged 11 to 19. There are currently 145 pupils on roll. The school has a Muslim ethos.
- All pupils board in accommodation that is located on the school premises. Most pupils return home every other weekend.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's last inspection was an emergency inspection in January 2020. The school met all the independent school standards and all of the national minimum standards that were checked during the inspection.
- The school's last standard inspection was in June 2019. The inspection judged that the overall effectiveness of the school required improvement. The school did not meet all of the independent school standards or all of the national minimum standards that were checked during the inspection.
- Since the most recent inspection, there have been some changes to the board of trustees. Several trustees have resigned. A trustee who was previously a member of the board has been appointed as the new chair, and a former member of staff has also been appointed as a trustee.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The school's last standard inspection took place in June 2019, when the school was judged to require improvement. The boarding provision was judged to be good.
- This inspection, in December 2020, took place with 30 minutes' notice.
- Inspectors met with leaders, including the headteacher and the head of boarding, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. Inspectors met with other staff, including teaching and boarding staff. Inspectors met with the trustees.
- Inspectors made a tour of the boarding and the school premises.
- Inspectors met with pupils in all year groups, except for the sixth form who were isolating at home. All meetings with pupils and staff took place in a socially distanced way.

## Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Barnaby Dowell

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection*

#### **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 now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
  - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
  - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.
- 30 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that, where the school provides accommodation, regard is had to Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 5 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

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

*Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection*

- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)



- The school's leadership and management consistently fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the standards are met. (NMS 13.4)

**The school now meets the following national minimum standards for boarding schools**

- Suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for boarders, which are reasonably accessible from the sleeping accommodation. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls unless each toilet facility is provided in a separate room intended for use by one pupil at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from the inside. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for boarders. (NMS 5.3)
- Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders are appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility. (NMS 5.4)
- The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (NMS 6.2)
- 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. (NMS 10.1)
- Boarders have access to information about events in the world outside the school, and access to local facilities which are appropriate to their age. (NMS 10.4)

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