

Inspection of Darul Madinah

50 Darvills Lane, Slough SL1 2PH

Inspection dates: 9–11 November 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's aims – to nurture pupils who exemplify the values of Islam, make a positive contribution to the community, and champion the faith – are threaded through all aspects of school life. Adults have high expectations of all pupils. They expect them to behave well, to work hard, and to be kind to each other. Pupils are very happy to be in school. They greet visitors warmly, politely and with interest. Pupils who spoke with the inspector said that they liked everything about their school. They feel safe and valued. Pupils know that their teachers will look after them if they are worried or sad.

Pupils are excited about learning. They contribute their ideas confidently during lessons and listen keenly to their teachers. Pupils want to please and work hard. They behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They look very smart in their school uniform. Pupils enjoy playing games and chatting with each other during play times. They behave sensibly and treat others with respect. Adults know pupils very well and are sensitive to their needs. Leaders have established clear procedures for dealing with any concerns about bullying should they arise.

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

Leaders have established a broad, engaging and ambitious curriculum which ensures that pupils develop well personally and academically. Curriculum plans are consistent with the national curriculum and the early years framework. They provide teachers with clear and well-sequenced content. Teachers follow the plans closely so that everyone knows what pupils have learned and what will come next. Pupils' learning builds well as they move through the school.

The school's well-established phonics programme helps pupils to develop secure early reading skills. Confident and knowledgeable teaching ensures that pupils of all abilities learn the phonics skills needed to read successfully. For example, one pupil explained that she 'sounds it out' if she gets stuck on a word. Leaders have rightly identified the need to strengthen consistency in the way that phonics is taught. They intend to update the school's phonics programme in the coming weeks.

A few pupils fell behind in their reading during the pandemic lockdowns. Extra help for these pupils is helping them to practise and recall previous learning. Parents are playing their part, too, by reading regularly with their children at home. This is helping pupils to catch up.

Pupils learn how to use resources, such as cubes and number lines, reliably and successfully to complete mathematics calculations. This helps to develop their mathematical understanding while also establishing helpful learning habits. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 1 used cubes and number lines to add two numbers together, before going on to tackle increasingly challenging problems. Teachers regularly reinforce pupils' knowledge of mathematics vocabulary and

terms. They make sure pupils have plenty of opportunities to use and reinforce what they know about number. During the inspection, for instance, children in Reception learned about the number 3. They watched a short film clip, counted objects, and practised writing the number on their whiteboards.

Teachers regularly assess the progress pupils are making in different subjects. They use questioning in lessons effectively in order to check pupils' understanding and to encourage participation. Teachers make sure that pupils of all abilities can complete the work set successfully. However, sometimes teaching does not address key weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding which are hindering their progress. This is particularly the case for the least-able pupils and for those with special educational needs.

The school gives pupils' personal development a high priority. Its personal, social and health curriculum teaches a wide range of topics, such as mental health, positive relationships, and rights and responsibilities. The school's relationships and sex education plans comply with the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance.

The school's religious ethos provides a strong framework for the everyday life of the school. Prayer times provide moments for personal reflection and contribute positively to the strength of the school's community atmosphere. The school successfully promotes self-respect, as well as respect for the views and beliefs of others. Pupils learn about different cultures and religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity.

Fundamental British values are consistent with the school's own values and are promoted strongly. During the inspection, for example, pupils watched and listened intently as teachers explained Remembrance Day. Pupils who spoke with the inspector knew that the poppies on her lanyard were a symbol of respect for the many people who had died during wars. The school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Pupils are excited about learning and highly motivated to do well. Their positive attitudes to learning and their good behaviour make a strong contribution to the school's atmosphere. Teaching is rarely interrupted by misbehaviour, although occasionally teachers have to remind one or two pupils to stop chatting when they should be working.

Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards are consistently met. The headteacher has developed a detailed knowledge of the requirements of the independent school standards and regularly checks that these are in place. He is ably supported by the early years leader. Leaders have an accurate view of strengths and development priorities in the school. For example, priorities for improvement identified by the inspector had already been noted in the school's development plan.

The inspector considered the proprietor's proposed material change to the school's registration during this inspection. The proprietor proposes an increase in the

number of pupils on roll from 12 to 30. The inspector considers the school's current accommodation to be too small for 30 pupils but would recommend an increase in number on roll to 25. The proprietor also proposes a change in age range from 4–5 to 4–7. The inspector recommends a change in age range to 4–6. This is because the school's current curriculum is suitable for Reception and Year 1. The relevant independent school standards are likely to continue to be met if the DfE decides to approve implementation of the material change.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have a thorough understanding of safeguarding issues. The school participates in a safeguarding partnership, run by the local authority, which provides leaders with timely updates about developments in safeguarding. The school's safeguarding policy, which is published on the school's website, provides clear guidance about what to do in the case of a concern. Well-established procedures ensure that the school operates safely. For example, clear routines ensure that pupils are delivered and collected by parents securely at the start and end of the school day. Leaders make sure that staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding procedures.

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have identified some inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics. They have chosen an alternative phonics programme to address this issue. The new phonics programme will be introduced in the next few months. Leaders have also scheduled staff training in phonics. This will ensure that staff have the necessary subject knowledge to implement the new phonics programme consistently well. Leaders should continue with plans to strengthen the teaching of phonics.
- The help provided for the least-able pupils does not always focus sharply enough on the underlying reasons for their confusion, for example weaknesses in understanding of fundamental concepts, such as number, in mathematics. This is particularly the case for the least-able pupils and for those with special educational needs. Leaders have already identified this aspect of the school's work as a priority for further development. The school's special needs coordinator continues to draw appropriately on advice provided by the local authority special needs team, and staff training has been scheduled for later this term. Leaders should go ahead with plans to improve provision for the least-able pupils, including those with special educational needs.

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School details

Unique reference number	147293
DfE registration number	871/6005
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10202279
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	4 to 5
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	12
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Darul Madinah Slough Ltd
Chair	Waqas Choudhery
Headteacher	Waqas Choudhery
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800
Telephone number	07737 309 911
Website	www.dmslough.co.uk
Email address	operations.slough@darulmadinah.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Darul Madinah School is an independent school. It is registered for up to 12 pupils between the ages of four and five years old. The school has an Islamic religious character.
- The school currently has a Reception class and a Year 1 class.
- The school has admitted pupils above the registered age range. It has also exceeded the maximum number of pupils on roll that it is registered to admit.
- The school is located in an urban part of Slough, Berkshire. A registered nursery, Darul Madinah Nursery School, operates from another part of the same building and provides non-domestic childcare. The nursery has a separate entrance to the school. The school and nursery have the same proprietor.
- The school shares its site with a community centre run by the Pakistan Welfare Association.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- This was the school's first standard inspection since it was registered by the Department for Education in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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 meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- The inspector held a number of meetings with the headteacher and early years leader during this inspection.
- The inspector looked closely at the following subjects when considering the quality of education: reading, mathematics and science. She met with the reading leader, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, spoke with pupils about their learning, and reviewed curriculum plans.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktimes, and as pupils moved around the school.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the end of the school day.
- The inspector checked the single central register and talked with leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also considered safeguarding documents and records.

- The inspector reviewed the school’s website, as well as a range of documentation, including policies and documents associated with the independent school standards.
- The proprietor’s proposed material change to the school’s registration was considered at the same time as this inspection. The proprietor proposes an increase in the number of pupils on roll from 23 to 30, and a change in age range from 4–5 to 4–7. This was the first material change inspection in respect of the proposed changes.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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