

Darul Uloom Al Arabiya Al Islamiya

Holcombe Hall, Holcombe Old Road, Holcombe, Nr. Bury, Lancashire BL8 4NG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

Darul Uloom is an independent boarding school. The boarding accommodation is on the same site as the school. The school currently has 351 students aged 11 to 23. At the time of the inspection, the school had 188 boarders. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Due to COVID-19, at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers carried out under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) on 17 March 2020. We returned to routine SCCIF inspections on 12 April 2021.

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 January 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The boarding school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Date of last inspection: 30 April 2019

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Children build trusted and secure relationships with the adults who are caring for them. They say that they are happy at school and enjoy the boarding experience. Children told the inspectors, 'We are all one big family.' They value their friendships and the strong sense of community.

Children are treated with dignity and respect. Children new to boarding are well supported, including those children who experience homesickness. The sensitive support that these children receive helps them to settle into school.

Children make good progress in their educational and personal development. Staff are ambitious for children and support them to do well. Boundaries are clear and expectations of behaviour high. Behaviour around the school was observed to be exemplary during the inspection.

Children said that they can talk about any concerns or worries that they might have. However, there is little evidence of children's views being sought about their boarding experience.

Leaders prioritise the needs of children but they do not consistently follow their own policies and procedures, as illustrated by the failure to identify and act on two GP-identified health risks. Furthermore, scant recording does not provide enough evidence that children's healthcare is being managed effectively.

Children enjoy the educational and recreational activities on offer, but community activities are limited in scope due to the pandemic. The leadership team has recognised this as an area for improvement and plans to rectify this.

Some improvements were noted to the boarding provision, including improvements to the two games rooms and plastering and painting of the corridors. However, one national minimum standard remains unmet. Inspectors found that some bathrooms were cold and dirty, a minority of door closers did not work effectively, and in three bedrooms window closers were missing. A number of these shortfalls were rectified immediately. That said, these shortfalls demonstrate ineffective monitoring by leaders to ensure a timely response to maintenance needs that arise.

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

Arrangements to promote and safeguard the welfare of the children are effective. All staff have a clear understanding of how to keep children safe and children say that they feel safe. An independent listener is accessible to the children to discuss and deal with any issues of concern.

Concerns are reported without delay to the designated safeguarding team. Staff have a clear understanding of the safeguarding policy and report any concerns accordingly. The school has developed effective links with the local authority designated officer.

Incidents of bullying are extremely rare. Records show that a zero-tolerance approach is taken when an incident has occurred. Relationships between different year groups were observed to be warm and supportive, with the younger children looking to the older ones for guidance and friendship. As a result, the number of negative incidents is very low.

The recruitment and vetting of new staff are effective. Visitors are checked on arrival through an electronic system.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leaders and managers show an ambitious vision and have high expectations for what all children can achieve. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the boarding provision and are working hard to secure improvements. Further improvements to the boarding provision are needed and work is ongoing.

The governing body meets monthly and is overseeing an aspirational development plan for the school and for boarding. They have ensured that systems are in place for monitoring the fabric of the building. However, the school leadership team has failed to use these monitoring systems effectively to monitor the quality of the boarding accommodation and ensure good repair and cleanliness for all bedrooms and bathrooms.

The school leadership team has been through a period of transition and the progress of the team has been disrupted by COVID-19. Parents spoken with were very positive about their children's experiences of boarding and the progress they have made. That said, communication with parents could further be improved, as demonstrated by the minority who expressed discontent in the online feedback.

Children are clear about the role of the boarding supervisors and see them as important to their well-being. The boarding supervisors are accessible at all times and are suitably trained in safeguarding and first aid. This ensures the welfare and safety of the children.

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:

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

Recommendations

- Enhance the range and choice of activities for boarders outside teaching time.
- Ensure that boarders are actively encouraged to contribute their views to the operation of the boarding provision.

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/teacher in charge: Mr A Hans & Mr M Khan

Type of school: Boarding school

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Inspectors

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