

Jamiatul-ilm Wal Huda

Jamiatul-Ilm Wal-Huda UK

30 Moss Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 5JT

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

This independent school provides day and boarding places to male Muslim students, providing them with both Islamic and secular education. Boarding accommodation for students under 18 years of age is sited in one of two purpose-built school buildings. As well as classrooms and the boarding provision, the school has its own mosque. Currently, the school has a total of 458 students, with 123 boarding students under the age of 18 years and 98 boarding pupils over the age of 18 years. It is situated in Blackburn, Lancashire.

Inspection dates: 22 to 24 November 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The boarding school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Date of last inspection: 10 July 2018

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Outcomes for children are positive. Children have an inclusive, yet individualised, and well-planned boarding experience that enables them to make good progress in their educational, personal and social development. One child told the inspector, 'Teachers always care and are there for you. There are lots of things to learn from different people.'

Effective health arrangements support children's well-being throughout their time at the school. Children can access local health services if required, and school medical officers have completed training in first aid to respond to immediate concerns. Medical officers have a strong awareness of the safe administration of medication to protect children's health.

The daily school routine is organised well and balances academic and religious studies with prayer and free time. Children feel listened to, and talked about the various things that the school has improved on their request, such as a change in the menu and an increase in the internet speed. Staff are focused on the needs of the children, putting them at the centre of their practice. A parent said, 'My son is extremely happy at the school and, if he ever needs to speak to someone or ask for help, there is always someone readily available.'

Children can contact their parents by using their own mobile phones or the free-to-use boarding house telephone.

The school is well established in the local community and children are encouraged to take part in community events. For example, children have taken part in events to raise funds for local charities and completed litter picking in the community.

Children benefit from home-cooked food provided by the chef. Meals are nutritious and of a good quality. Mealtimes are social occasions when children enjoy each other's company. Dietary needs are well met, and the kitchen staff are aware of individual children's allergies.

The boarding accommodation is poor and requires improvement. Children's bedrooms have not been maintained to an acceptable standard. Carpets are worn, food and drink has been thrown on some of the walls, there is graffiti on some walls, a fridge had food in it that needed to be thrown away, and there is damage to a wall. Furthermore, a large sink that the children use was dirty, creating a health risk. Given that some children stay in the boarding houses for long periods, this is detrimental to their experiences.

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

Boarding staff and managers take good care to keep children safe. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety, but this is proportionate to their age and developing maturity. Younger children receive greater oversight, which is appropriate to their age. Children told the inspectors that they have a range of adults to speak with if they have any concerns or worries.

Staff are aware of the procedures for keeping children safe. The staff feel confident about reporting safeguarding issues. The school's designated safeguarding officer shares information appropriately with relevant professionals, such as the police and the local authority. Furthermore, all staff undertake safeguarding training to ensure that they are alert to risks and dangers that children may face.

Children's behaviour is generally very good. They are polite, respectful and considerate. Incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are rare but managed well when they occur. This is supported by the good relationships that exist between children and the staff.

Staffing levels ensure that there are always sufficient adults around to support and supervise children. Adult senior students act as part of the staff group, although their roles and responsibilities are limited and clearly defined by management. Children value the input of these senior students, who provide advice and support when required.

The procedures for recruitment are effective and follow the school's policy for safer recruitment. The single central record contains all the relevant pre-employment checks on staff.

Leaders and managers fail to prioritise fire safety. Some fire doors have had locks removed, which has affected their fire resistance and could fail to prevent the passage of fire and smoke. Due to concerns raised during the inspection, inspectors made a referral to the local fire service. A fire safety inspector was spoken to and will visit the boarding provision. The school also arranged for the fire service to attend during the inspection. However, despite remedial action being taken by the school to address the fire doors, it was confirmed by the fire service that they will need to be assessed by the fire safety inspector.

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

The level of monitoring by governors, and how the governors hold the school to account are not effective. There is insufficient oversight and governance of safeguarding arrangements and the boarding provision. This has led to concerns around fire safety, along with a deterioration of children's living accommodation and staff not understanding the regulatory framework in which they are working. This lack of scrutiny is not helping the school to improve.

Children's bedroom doors had glass windows on them with no covering, and there was CCTV in the corridors and bathrooms. This compromised children's privacy. However, once this was pointed out, staff took swift action to remedy the problems by fitting privacy window film to the windows and removing the CCTV. An effective programme of routine checks on the boarding environment is to be put in place, which will identify and prevent these deficiencies.

The headteacher, principal and senior staff are a visible presence in the school and are positive influences on the progress of the children. Communication and information-sharing is good and means that boarding and education staff work well together. This cohesive approach has resulted in a supportive and open culture, and means that the school values are applied across all aspects of boarding and educational life.

Boarding is an integral aspect of school life and is well embedded across the school community. Staff work across all areas; consequently, they know the children well. This whole-school approach supports children into further education, training or employment, and in holding positions of responsibility in the community.

The residential staff benefit from good informal support and group supervision that help them to reflect on their strengths and areas for development. The staff have access to training and attend some workshops with the teaching staff. Most of the boarding staff have been previous students at the school. This increases the feeling of consistency and stability at the school. Staff told inspectors that they are well supported, and they can approach any members of the senior team for advice and guidance.

The children and parents consulted with were positive about the staff and the school. One parent said, 'I am extremely happy as a parent with how the school is being run and managed.'

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:

- 2.1 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.
- 2.4 The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met.
- 4.4 Boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders are well lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide accessible accommodation for any boarders with disabilities.
- 10.2 The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and ensures that alerting systems are accessible and there are clear evacuation plans for all children, subject to their needs.

Recommendations

- Good-quality sleeping accommodation is provided for boarders. It is well organised and managed with ongoing assessments of risk, which should be documented, and findings acted on to reduce risk for all boarders. Accommodation gives boarders appropriate privacy, taking into account sex, age and any special requirements. Where children share a bedroom, they are able to express a preference about whom they share with.

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: SC005870

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr A Ahmed

Type of school: Boarding School

Telephone number: 01254 673105

Email address: info@jamiyah.co.uk

Inspectors

Dave Carrigan, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Paul Scott, Social Care Inspector

Denise Jolly, Social Care Inspector

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