

Inspection of Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya School

Heath Lane, Summerfield, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 4BS

Inspection dates: 11 to 13 October 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Sixth-form provision

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya School aims to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding through the study of distinct Islamic and secular curriculums. Leaders expect pupils to work hard and achieve well. However, the secular curriculum at all key stages lacks quality, both in its construction and in its delivery. This hinders pupils' progress.

Pupils are keen, happy and enthusiastic individuals. They greet each other, staff and visitors with a warm and welcoming smile each day. Staff and pupils treat each other with genuine care, courtesy, politeness and respect. One pupil's comment that 'the school is like a family' was echoed by all.

For younger pupils, the Islamic and secular elements combine to deepen pupils' understanding of their faith in the context of modern Britain. However, this is not so for sixth-form students. Provision for sixth-form students' wider personal development is weak.

Pupils feel safe. The strong, respectful school community means that pupils do not worry about bullying. Pupils trust adults to resolve any issues and know who to turn to for help. However, leaders lack the professional curiosity needed to safeguard pupils. Leaders wait to be told the detail if another agency raises a concern. They do not follow up reports quickly to help 'join the dots' and keep pupils safe.

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

Leaders place great emphasis on the faith aspect of pupils' education. Pupils approach this studiously. The Islamic studies programme supports the secular curriculum in many ways, for example by enhancing pupils' aesthetic and creative learning. Pupils learn a range of subjects in the secular curriculum in key stages 3 and 4. In each subject, leaders aim to match the ambition of the national curriculum. However, they have not done this successfully. For instance, pupils do not have practical science lessons to learn how to work scientifically. In humanities, too little curriculum time limits the content that pupils learn. Consequently, pupils do not experience the rich curriculum that they should.

Leaders are determined to improve the curriculum. They have already made some positive changes, such as adopting a new scheme of work in mathematics. Senior leaders have the capacity to drive improvement. However, the proprietor body has not ensured leaders at all levels have the knowledge and skills to match their dedication and enthusiasm. Staff have received some training, but this has been insufficient and sporadic. Leaders at all levels do not have a clear strategic plan to address the most pressing issues.

Many teachers do not have the subject knowledge they need to teach their subject well. This is compounded by a lack of knowledge of how to best explain the learning set out in the curriculum. This means that teachers are not alert to the specific prior

learning that pupils need to draw on when learning something new. They are also unaware of the typical misconceptions and errors that can stifle pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers' delivery of the curriculum is weak.

Teachers try to identify pupils' gaps in knowledge. They use a range of assessment methods to do this. As a result, teachers are aware when pupils' learning is insecure. However, teachers are not adapting learning to help pupils address and rectify any gaps. Pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to practise new learning. Review activities merely reinforce pupils' lack of confidence in their own understanding. Learning often moves on to new ideas and concepts prematurely and, as a result, limits pupils' progress.

The sixth-form curriculum lacks breadth. Pupils have a narrow range of subjects to choose from. These do not provide pupils with the qualifications and skills needed to take their next step. As a result, some pupils are following a programme that will hinder future ambition and prevent them from moving into their chosen career.

Leaders told inspectors that there are no pupils attending the school with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). There is, however, a lack of staff expertise in identifying and planning to meet the needs of any pupils with SEND, should they join the school.

Staff encourage pupils to read. Pupils who need support with reading get help after school. However, some pupils struggle to spell key words and make the same, repeated grammatical errors when writing. When reading aloud, some pupils find reading the names of authors and key words difficult. Teachers do not always pick this up and correct pupils.

Pupils' behaviour contributes positively towards their learning. They trust their teachers to support them and want to do well. Leaders celebrate and reward pupils' hard work. They monitor pupils' behaviour closely and offer support for those pupils who need to improve their behaviour. This is effective. As a result, the school is calm and orderly, and lessons are rarely disrupted.

Leaders have introduced a new personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum in key stages 3 and 4. They have constructed this so that it sits alongside the Islamic studies curriculum. It meets the requirements of the statutory guidance on relationships, sex and health education. In PSHE education and in assemblies, pupils learn about a variety of issues relating to life in modern Britain. They learn the importance of tolerance and respect. Pupils talked to inspectors about issues such as democracy, relationships, protected characteristics and equality. This helps prepare pupils for life in the wider community. The school meets its duties under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. However, leaders have not put the same thought into the PSHE curriculum for sixth-form students. Older pupils do not, therefore, get the information they need that is relevant to their needs as young Muslim adults in modern Britain.

Pupils receive careers information, advice and guidance as part of their PSHE curriculum. However, there are two flaws in this provision. Firstly, pupils do not get sufficient experience of the world of work. This is especially so for sixth-form students. Secondly, pupils are not well informed about the courses and careers that they can progress on to. Year 11 pupils and Year 13 students talked to inspectors about options such as college, and careers, such as accountancy. However, they knew little about these. Pupils are therefore not well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training.

Pupils can participate in some activities outside of their studies. For instance, they can join sports clubs and learn about calligraphy. Pupils also participate in and run a student council. Leaders use this to listen to pupils' thoughts and ideas. Leaders have clear plans in place to extend the number of clubs and trips on offer. They recognise that current provision is not broad enough. This means that pupils, including sixth-form students, cannot develop a wide range of interests and talents.

The proprietor body knows the school and understands its statutory obligations. It challenges leaders through meetings and regular visits to school. Leaders work with the proprietor body to listen to staff. Leaders expect staff to work hard, but value their efforts and encourage them to share any concerns about their workload. The proprietor body knows that the quality of education needs to be better. It has tried to recruit and develop skilled teaching staff but knows there is more to do. It is not acting with sufficient urgency to make this happen. The proprietor body is not fulfilling its responsibility to ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently and securely.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders are not robust in following up reports from other agencies that could indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. They are reliant on others to inform them of risk, rather than recognising their role in keeping pupils safe. This means that they do not know when they need to share information or act.

Staff are trained and know the importance of being vigilant to help keep pupils safe. Leaders have suitable systems in place for staff to raise concerns. Pupils learn about the potential risks to their safety, such as online risks. They know who to talk to if they have any worries or concerns.

The safeguarding policy adheres to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State. It is available to parents and carers on request.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders of safeguarding lack the professional curiosity needed to keep pupils safe. They do not follow up reports from other agencies in a timely way. This means that a pupil could be known to be at risk of harm and leaders would not know, and therefore cannot safeguard the pupil. Leaders should ensure that they respond quickly to any information about a pupil, working closely with other agencies to keep pupils safe.
- The proprietor body has not ensured that leaders have the knowledge to develop and deliver an acceptable standard of education. As a result, the quality of pupils' education is weak. The proprietor body needs to ensure that that curriculum leaders have the support, knowledge and skills they need to lead curriculum improvement effectively.
- Leaders have not ensured that all staff have the subject knowledge and subject pedagogical knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum effectively. This means that some teachers do not know how best to teach their subject so that all pupils learn well. Leaders should ensure that all teaching staff know the content of the curriculum securely and how best to explain it to pupils.
- Leaders have not ensured that all teachers know how to support pupils effectively when they uncover gaps in their learning. This means that some pupils make little progress as a lack of prior learning inhibits the learning of something new. Leaders should ensure that all teachers know how to adapt their practice effectively, based on their assessment of pupils' understanding. Leaders should ensure that staff know and understand how to identify pupils with possible SEND.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils get sufficient time to practise using new knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not remember the important knowledge they need for future learning. Leaders should ensure that pupils get the time to practise applying new knowledge so that they can remember this securely.
- The design and coverage of the sixth-form curriculum does not provide adequately for all students. The range of qualifications offered is narrow, students do not get sufficient meaningful encounters with the world of work, and opportunities for students to develop their wider talents and interests are limited. As a result, many students are ill-prepared for their next step when leaving school. Leaders should ensure that sixth-form students can study a range of subjects and have a breadth of experience that means they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have not ensured that all pupils and students receive timely and relevant careers information advice and guidance, especially in the sixth form. This means that pupils and students are not well informed about the full range of careers and pathways that they could follow as citizens of modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that all pupils get the information and guidance they need so that they can make informed choices about their next steps.

- Some of the independent school standards are not being met. This means that pupils are not receiving a suitable education and being kept safe. The proprietor body must ensure that all the independent school standards are met consistently and securely.

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The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	117044
DfE registration number	885/6031
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10238116
Type of school	Other Independent School
School category	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11 to 28
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	32
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya Board of Trustees
Chair	Maksut Gangat
Headteacher	Abdullah Memi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,100
Annual fees (boarders)	£3,300
Telephone number	01562 66894
Website	None
Email address	school@madinatul-uloom.org
Date of previous inspection	8 to 10 October 2019

Information about this school

- The last full standard inspection was in October 2019. At this time, the school met all the independent school standards. Following this, a school and boarding emergency inspection was completed in July 2021. At that inspection, the school met all the independent school standards that were checked. A further emergency inspection was carried out in October 2021. At that inspection, the school met all the independent school standards that were checked.
- The school is an independent boarding and day school for Muslim pupils and students aged 11 to 28. The vast majority of pupils are boarders.
- Pupils undertake Islamic studies during most of the morning, followed by a secular curriculum in the late morning and afternoon. The school has a Muslim ethos.
- The school and the boarding provision are situated in the grounds of a former teacher training college on the outskirts of Kidderminster in Worcestershire.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with three members of the proprietor body, including its chair.
- This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the boarding provision.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in PSHE, mathematics, science and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. This included students in the sixth form.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about English.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying, attendance and safeguarding.

- Inspectors met with members of staff individually and in groups, and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised policies and documents relating to the independent school standards. The lead inspector toured the premises.

Inspection team

Ian Tustian, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Howes

His Majesty's 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; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential;
 - 2(2)(g) where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs;
- 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 use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and

- 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act[11] 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

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 30 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that, where the school provides accommodation, regard is had to Standard 4 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 9 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools.

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; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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