

# Darul Uloom London School

Darul Uloom London

Darul Uloom, Foxbury Avenue, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 6SD

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this boarding school

This is an independent boarding school for boys. It is located in Chislehurst and has a Muslim ethos. The school is registered for 155 pupils aged from 11 to 19 years and there are currently 155 pupils on roll. All 155 pupils board in accommodation on the school premises. Most children return home every other weekend.

The school's new principal was appointed in December 2022. The head of boarding has been in post for over four years. He has an appropriate qualification.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious incidents that occurred at the setting since the last inspection are under investigation by the appropriate authorities. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the setting in response to the incidents were considered (where appropriate) alongside other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

The boarding provision was last inspected in March 2022.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school

### Inspection dates: 25 to 27 January 2023

**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      good

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

**Date of last inspection:** 22 March 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have a positive experience of boarding at this school. All six children spoken to said only nice things about the school. Many children talked about socialising and friendships as the best things about the school. Some children said that they missed being with their friends when they are at home with their families. One child said that they felt more comfortable at the school than at their own home.

The rhythm of daily prayers and Islamic studies provide calm and a meaningful direction in children's lives. Children really enjoy this aspect of the school. One child talked about staff helping him to be a good British Muslim. He then talked about the respect for other faiths and different ways of being.

The voice of the child is strong at the school. Children feel able to express their views directly and through the Children's Council. School leaders listen to and act on the views, wishes and feelings of children. For example, children contributed to the food menu being more varied.

A sensitive induction helps new boarders to settle in their new environment with ease. Over time, children develop a feeling of belonging to the school. Some boarding staff and school leaders were themselves boarders at the school. Some children talked about how this helps boarding staff to empathise with children and really understand them.

Boarding staff develop close and trusting relationships with children. Children said that staff were kind, caring and supportive. Some children said that staff are like family to them.

Children who become unwell while at school receive a caring response. Suitable arrangements are in place for first aid and medication. Parents usually take their unwell children home to recover and seek medical attention if needed.

Physical activities promote children's healthy lifestyles. Football, basketball, table tennis, pool and judo are particularly popular. Access to other activities, such as astronomy and reading about history, helps children to develop their knowledge, interests and hobbies.

Close working between academic and boarding staff ensures that there is a holistic approach to supporting children's learning and development. Parents receive regular progress reports and are happy with their children's progress. Parents take pleasure in seeing their children develop a strong character, good manners and respect. Children also develop better life skills and grow in independence.

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

Safeguarding children is a priority for the school and there is a whole-school approach to keeping children safe. The head of boarding, as designated safeguarding lead for the school, leads a strong safeguarding team. This team monitors concerns and ensures that staff follow good safeguarding practices.

The school's safeguarding and child protection policy provides comprehensive guidance to staff. This guidance, together with training on a wide range of safeguarding topics, enables staff to have good safeguarding awareness. Staff are able to identify concerns and are familiar with the reporting procedures.

The school leaders work closely with partner agencies to address any safeguarding concerns and allegations against staff members. While the investigations are ongoing, they continue to liaise with the local authorities, the local authority designated officer who deals with allegations, the police and parents.

All children spoken to said that they felt safe at the school. They said they were comfortable speaking to staff about any issues and concerns. They are aware of the independent person for the school and also of external services, such as Childline, that they can contact if they have any concerns that they do not want to speak to school staff about.

Children welcome the school's ban on personal mobile phones and other smart devices. One child explained that being without a mobile phone makes him appreciate more of what life is really about. There are free phones for children to use to contact their families and there is also an IT room.

Clear and consistent rules and boundaries result in a high standard of behaviour from children. Children say that staff are fair when dealing with behaviour that is below the standard expected. Praise and rewards recognise children's achievements and create a positive environment. Many parents commented about how much their children's behaviours have improved since joining this school.

The school's ethos supports the development of positive relationships between children. Children understand what harassment and bullying look like. They say that staff are quick to resolve any disputes, bullying and misunderstandings. One child explained how the person who initially bullied him later became his best friend.

Safeguarding children from sexual harassment is an area for further improvement. One record relating to concerns about the alleged behaviour of one child towards another child is not child-centred and does not demonstrate the best safeguarding practices. Talking about the negative impact of homosexuality in the school when dealing with emerging allegations of sexual harassment is insensitive and may stop children talking about it.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

School leaders have a clear vision that centres around the Islamic faith and ethos. The school focuses on helping children to develop their individuality, as well as preparing them for leadership roles in the community.

School leaders are highly visible at the school. They know staff and children well. There is a whole-school approach to monitoring children's experiences and progress, and helping them to grow and develop.

School leaders know the weaknesses of the school. An improvement plan is in place.

One of the main areas for improvement is the poor state of the physical environment. Although there is a small boarding area that is of a good standard, the majority of the accommodation and communal areas do not meet the national minimum standard for boarding schools. However, the poor-quality accommodation has not had a negative impact on children's overall experiences or their health and welfare. The health and safety arrangements and checks, including on fire safety, ensure that the physical environment is safe.

School leaders provide a supportive environment for staff to develop their knowledge and skills. Staff have access to a wide range of relevant training. All boarding staff had a review of their performance in December 2022.

The head of boarding provides clear guidance to staff. Discussions about the national minimum standards at the staff meetings enables staff to have a shared vision, to reflect on their boarding practices and to contribute to the improvement of the school.

## **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:

- 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 upon 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. This specifically relates to the quality of the sleeping accommodation. (Boarding schools: national minimum standard 4.1)
- Good quality living accommodation and equipment, including appropriate internet access, is provided for boarders for the purposes of organised and private study outside school hours and for social purposes. This specifically relates to the quality of the living accommodation. (Boarding schools: national minimum standard 4.2)
- Sufficient toilet and washing facilities with good quality fixtures and fittings and access to hot water are provided for boarders, are readily accessible from the sleeping accommodation and take into account sex, age and any special requirements. This specifically relates to the quality of toilet and washing facilities. (Boarding schools: national minimum standard 4.3)
- 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. This specifically relates to the cleanliness of the areas accessible to boarders. (Boarding schools: national minimum standard 4.4)

### **Point for improvement**

- School leaders should ensure that the school sensitively promotes open discussions about sexual harassment and that staff approach any emerging issues with curiosity and an open mind.

### **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:** SC006927

**Headteacher/teacher in charge:** Tazmul Islam Rahman

**Type of school:** Boarding school

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## **Inspectors**

Seka Graovac, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Colin Bent, Social Care Inspector

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