

Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya

Madinatul Uloom Al-Islamiya, Butts Lane, Stone, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 4BH

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this boarding school

The school is an independent Islamic boarding and day school for boys and young men aged 11 to 28. There are 217 pupils at the school. The school can accommodate 199 boarders. At the time of inspection, there were 192 pupils boarding, 159 under the age of 18.

The boarding provision for all pupils is in the school grounds, with different age ranges in each boarding house.

The head of boarding has been in post for six years.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 3 to 5 October 2023

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	requires improvement to be 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.

Date of last inspection: 11 October 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Inspection judgements

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

Leaders do not have a clear system to monitor children's progress and experience in boarding. They use documents and processes but these are not well coordinated for individual children. As a result, the direct impact boarding has on children's progress and experience is hard to determine.

Leaders have made some improvements to the boarding accommodation for students. For example, most bedrooms and corridors have been freshly painted. However, several shortfalls in the boarding accommodation identified at the last full inspection have not been rectified. For example, carpets have still not been replaced in several places in the boarding houses, including in some boarding house corridors. There are still rotten stall dividers in some toilets and some showers are not working. In addition, kitchenettes and a microwave were dirty. The school cleaned the kitchenette and replaced the microwave during the inspection. The planned refurbishment works are taking too long to complete, and students do not live in good-quality boarding accommodation.

Students enjoy playing football and have a common room with a table tennis table and a pool table. There are also a range of after-school clubs. However, students and parents told inspectors that there are limited activities on and off site for boarders. There are plans to use the main dining hall to give boarders more space for activities such as badminton, but this has not yet been actioned. In addition, while students enjoy football, the goals are rusty and do not have nets. This reduces the enjoyment for students.

The school has generally good relationships with parents. However, parents told inspectors that facilities and activities could be improved. Parents raised no concerns about the staff who care for students. When students have medical appointments, staff take students to these to offer support. Parents and students appreciate these efforts from staff.

Students have good relationships with each other. Most students identify the close-knit community feeling as a strength of the school. Students also have good relationships with staff, who they feel they can go to for support.

The school provides students with regular opportunities to communicate with and have time with their families. Staff respond to parents' feedback when possible and make parents welcome when they visit their children.

Students understand school rules. Leaders use school assemblies to discuss themes that are important to students, and students understand the boundaries. Students respect the staff in the school, and each other, and this is reciprocated by staff towards students.

Students make progress in their education. This opens students' possibilities for the future. Several students want to stay at the school post-18 to continue their Islamic studies. Some students talked about wanting to give something back to the school for all the support they feel they have received. This indicates how students feel part of the school community.

Staff support students when they first arrive at the school. There is an induction plan in place for new students, which helps them to settle into boarding life. New students have support from the school buddy system. In addition, staff take action to support students who struggle with the transition to boarding. They work in partnership with students' parents to provide reassurance. As a result, students settle and overcome their worries. However, new pupils do not take part in a fire evacuation drill from their boarding house early in their induction. While there is signage for escape routes, students do not have an opportunity to practise these evacuations as part of their early induction and orientation in boarding.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Leaders' oversight of safeguarding is improving. A monitoring system is in place that links different school departments and different levels of concern. Since the last full inspection, a child has made a complaint about two members of staff. The school investigated this, liaised with external agencies and took action. The child, parents and external agencies were satisfied with the school's response.

Leaders have improved the school's recruitment processes. For example, leaders have redesigned their interview questions so they can explore applicant understanding of safeguarding. School leaders carry out all relevant checks and the school single central record meets requirements. This means that leaders can be better assured that those who provide care are safe to do so.

Students are polite and respectful to each other, staff and visitors. There are systems in place to address poor behaviour, which students understand. The school uses merits and awards to promote positive behaviour and respect throughout the boarding provision and school. The behaviour lead also analyses behaviour to consider if students need any further interventions. Students spoke positively about end-of-term trips and celebration events with parents at the school.

Support staff work with students to help them understand and recognise what bullying is and why it is unacceptable. Staff use consequences effectively to help students learn from any behaviour incidents and hold conflict resolution meetings as needed. As a result, there are few significant incidents.

Staff have systems to manage students' medication and health conditions. Leaders ensure that there is an up-to-date list of students who have medication and any allergies, that all staff can access. The catering staff are alert to these students at

mealtimes. Staff assess students' competency to self-administer medication, such as using inhalers. However, recording needs to improve to ensure that children's documents include the times when children use inhalers. This will help staff have the most up-to-date information in relation to children.

Leaders have systems in place to monitor health and safety. For example, there is regular testing by external contractors for legionella and fire safety. In addition, there are regular checks of fire extinguishers and the fire alarms. However, there remain areas where maintenance has been slow to be carried out. This means that the boarding accommodation requires improvement.

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

Leaders have not taken effective and timely action to improve the environment of the boarding accommodation for students. This means that students do not have a nurturing and stimulating environment to live and grow in. Students and parents told inspectors that they appreciate the work that leaders have done, but more improvements are needed.

Boarding leaders have developed in confidence since the last inspection. They have ensured that trustees are aware of the refurbishment needs of the boarding houses. Trustees support planned improvements and despite financial constraints leaders have made some progress with the refurbishment. Some monitoring systems are in place but there are still gaps in oversight of the boarding houses. For example, some repairs are not reported in a timely way. In addition, the statement of boarding principles and practice is not a clear, concise document. As a result, the impact of the ethos and approach to boarding cannot be clearly measured.

Leaders know that they need to improve how staff record students' progress across the span of their development at school. The lack of cohesion across records means that the measures the school relies on are not well collated. As a result, the students' journey of development at the school is not as clear as it could be.

Staff look to leaders for guidance and support. Staff have regular meetings where they discuss boarding matters and practice. However, leaders have not developed regular and recorded individual support meetings for staff, to challenge and develop them. In addition, staff appraisal records all bear a striking similarity to each other. All staff have the same objectives and objectives do not have timescales and are hard to measure. This shortfall was noted at the last full inspection and leaders have not acted to address this.

Trustees' oversight of the school has improved. There are now regular recorded meetings between the chair of trustees and the headteacher. In addition, the lead governor for boarding and the head of boarding also meet regularly. Governors have a good understanding of safeguarding in the school. They are committed to the

school becoming successful. However, this system of accountability, challenge and support needs to continue to develop.

Leaders have put an independent listener in place who is available to students. He knows the school well and understands how to share any concerns internally if needed. This offers students additional support if they need someone to talk to other than their family, friends and staff.

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:

- The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met. (Boarding schools: national minimum standards 2.4)
- 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. (Boarding schools: national minimum standards 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. (Boarding schools: national minimum standards 4.4)
- All boarders are able to access a good range and choice of activities outside teaching time, including sufficient and suitably timed free time each day. Suitable risk assessments are in place and followed for any activities which may put boarders at risk of harm. These should not prevent children having experiences that provide challenge and adventure. (Boarding schools: national minimum standards 18.2)
- Boarders have access to a range and choice of safe recreational areas, both indoors and outdoors, and there are safe areas at school where boarders can be alone if they wish. (Boarding schools: national minimum standards 18.3)
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (Boarding schools: national minimum standards 20.1)

Points for improvement

- Leaders should ensure that children who are new to the school or boarding should take part in a practice fire evacuation from boarding as part of their early induction and orientation.
- Leaders should ensure that the statement of boarding principles and practice is in one cohesive document.

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: SC043039

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mr A Memi

Type of school: Boarding school

Telephone number: 01562 66894

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Inspectors

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