

Darul Uloom

Holcombe Hall, 149 Holcombe Old Road, Holcombe, 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. At the time of the inspection, there were 421 students aged from 11 to 23 on roll at the school and 216 boarders.

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

Inspection dates: 30 January to 1 February 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	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 provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Date of last inspection: 25 January 2022

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children enjoy their boarding experience and make good progress in many areas of their life. They have opportunities to develop their social skills and independence and improve their learning. Staff are committed to their role, which is reflected in the positive relationships they have with the children.

Education attendance is good, and care staff support children to transition between boarding and education. Some care staff work across both settings and support children with their educational needs. This provides stability and consistency.

Children's medical and wider health needs are well met. Medication is stored securely, and clear records are maintained of all medication administered. Strong links with professionals, such as pharmacists and general practitioners, ensure that children are well and that any health concerns around their physical or emotional well-being are responded to.

The arrangements for children to move into the boarding provision are well organised. This includes a mentor system and consideration for matching children with friends in bedrooms. These arrangements help children to settle quickly.

Children's views are sought and staff act on requests that they make. Children highlighted different members of staff, including teachers, care staff and the independent listener, who they can talk to if they have any concerns.

The school caters well for children's individual dietary needs. Mealtimes are social occasions and children's feedback relating to meals served is positive.

There is a range of extra-curricular activities available that promote children's emotional and physical development effectively.

Leaders have made some improvements to the boarding accommodation for children and there is an ongoing programme of work. For example, some bedrooms have had new windows installed and have been freshly painted. However, there are still shortfalls in the boarding accommodation. For example, some kitchen areas are not being regularly cleaned, there is damage to light fittings, some bedrooms are damp and some showers do not work. As a result, it is not the homely or inviting environment that staff want for children.

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

Effective safeguarding measures promote children's welfare. All staff are trained in safeguarding and know how to respond should any concerns be raised. All incidents relating to children's safety are recorded. There are good links with the local authority designated officer and local safeguarding partnership.

The school has an independent listener, along with a number of visitors to the school, who the children can speak to should they have any concerns or worries.

There is a strong culture of peer support, with older children supporting the welfare of younger children. Any concerns that the older children may identify are appropriately shared with the boarding staff.

Children's behaviour is generally good, and staff encourage them to respect their peers. Children know what acceptable behaviour is and understand the consequences that staff may give them should they fail to meet the standard. These consequences are based on restorative practices using a pastoral approach. This helps children to understand the effects of their behaviours on others.

Children unanimously say that no bullying behaviours are experienced or accepted at the school. This means that children develop good relationships with each other and demonstrate concern for others.

Regular health and safety checks and routine servicing of equipment all contribute to making sure that the boarding provision is safe for children, staff and visitors.

Thorough recruitment and selection procedures help to prevent unsuitable adults from working with children. Visitors are appropriately checked for identification before they enter the school grounds. These procedures promote children's safety by preventing unsuitable adults from working with them.

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

The school is led and managed by the headteacher, who is committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for all children regardless of their starting points. He is a visible leader and is supported by a leadership team, which includes the head of boarding. However, there are areas of leadership that continue to require improvement, such as monitoring and oversight of the boarding accommodation.

Staff receive regular supervision and attend weekly team meetings. They are cohesive and supportive of one another. The staff speak positively about the headteacher and head of care, who they feel are approachable and supportive. Several members of staff have been previous students at the school. This increases the feeling of consistency and stability at the school.

Staff training is well structured. Staff attend various courses that help to enhance their knowledge and skills. This helps them to understand their roles and how to ensure children's safety and well-being.

Trustees are highly committed to the school. They work in partnership with the school leadership team and offer support. Trustees say that they are here to support

the school and that they are not afraid to challenge senior leaders on any proposals that they are considering to make. This effective source of challenge helps the school to move forward continually and to look at new ways of supporting children.

An independent visitor has been appointed, and their visits provide an additional layer of scrutiny and oversight of the residential provision. Children confirmed that they have contact details for the visitor.

The children and parents consulted with are positive about the staff and the school. One parent said, 'My boys have been there for a few years, education has been excellent; boarding, no issues at all.'

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 standard(s) for boarding schools:

- The school's leadership and management fulfil their responsibilities consistently and effectively so that the standards are met.
- 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 who 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: SC008476

Headteacher: Mutiullah Khan

Type of school: Boarding school

Telephone number: 01706 826106

Email address: headteacher@duloom.org.uk

Inspectors

Dave Carrigan, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Michelle Bacon, Social Care Inspector

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