



Darul Uloom Islamic High School

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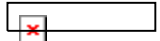
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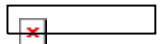
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Introduction and summary

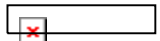


Purpose and scope of the inspection



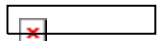
This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 163 of the Education Act 2002 in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school



Darul Uloom Islamic High School is an independent day school for boys that opened in 1985 and serves a multicultural community. It is run by a charitable trust and governed by a board of governors. There are 58 students in the school, aged 11 to 16 and 10 over the age of 16. The school is housed in a mosque complex in the Small Heath area of Birmingham. It aims to provide students with *'a firm understanding of the Islamic sciences as well as strong academic knowledge - a combination that will hopefully provide them with a wide range of possibilities in their pursuit of education.'*

Summary of main findings



The provision for the students' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and is clearly reflected in the students' attitude and behaviour; the provision for their cultural development is good.

Teaching is satisfactory with some very good features. The assessment of students' progress lacks rigour. The lack of adequate resources has a negative impact on the curriculum and students' achievement. Students are not sufficiently well prepared for the next stage of their education and the responsibilities of adult life. The welfare, health and safety of students are well promoted. Not all parents feel well informed of their children's progress. In the absence of the principal, who is on long-term sick leave, the school is well led by a new management team committed to improvement.

What the school does well

- it provides a secure Islamic environment which nurtures students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- it provides a broad and balanced Islamic curriculum;
- teaching is satisfactory overall. There are examples of very good teaching in the school;
- students and teachers have a very good working relationship;
- the welfare, health and safety of students are well promoted; and
- the senior management has correctly identified priorities for improvement.

What the school must do in order to comply with the regulations

- improve the quality of education as recorded in section 1;
- provide students with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England; and
- ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to verify the qualifications and references of all staff prior to their employment as recorded in section 4.

Compliance with the regulations for registration

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school achieves its aim to provide education that focuses on Islamic studies taught alongside National Curriculum subjects. The Darul Uloom Islamic studies curriculum and most language lessons are taught in the morning and the National Curriculum subjects are taught in the afternoon. The afternoon curriculum is only just sufficiently broad and balanced owing to the limited time

allocated to it. The new management team in place since the beginning of this academic year has started to plan links between the two curricula.

The Islamic curriculum is broad and balanced. It consists of an eight-year extensive programme to become an *alim* (scholar) delivered to mixed age classes. At present, the school provides the first four years of the full programme and will extend gradually from next academic year onwards. In the past the school had operated a full eight-year programme but owing to staffing difficulties the final stage of the *alim* course could not be maintained. The present Islamic theology curriculum mainly focuses on *Hanafi fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence developed by one of the four main schools of jurisprudence). During lessons, teachers make references to other major schools of jurisprudence as well. The course includes *aqeeda* (beliefs), Quranic translation, *hifdh* (memorisation), hadith (accounts of what the Prophet Muhammad did and said), Islamic history, *usool-al-fiqh* (sources of jurisprudence), Islamic manners, *seera* (life of Prophet Muhammad) *nahwa* and *saraf* (Arabic grammar and Arabic language). Bengali and Urdu are taught to a level that enables students to use these languages as the main media in lessons. This extensive curriculum provides links with other areas of the secondary curriculum taught in the afternoon but these links are not planned. The school conducts its annual exams for each subject and successful students move up through the course. The final examinations are conducted by a panel. Students who have memorised the Qur'an are awarded the *hifdh* certificate and those who have successfully completed the *alim* course are awarded the *alim* certificate. Some students go to Al-Azhar Islamic University in Egypt in pursuit of higher qualifications. Others progress to higher education or work in Britain.

Within the afternoon curriculum, all boys study English language and literature, mathematics, science and religious education/Islamic studies. All these subjects are examined at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. There has been a decline in examination results over the last few years and standards are well below the national average for five or more passes at A*-C grades and below average for five or more passes at A*-G grades. However, the 2004 GCSE results show improvement in standards in English and as more students attain higher grades. In languages, students can choose Arabic, Bengali or Urdu as options. They achieve best in Bengali and Urdu. All boys also take part in physical education (PE). Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught in Years 7 and 8 and students achieve well or very well in their computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) examinations. The school has plans to extend ICT to the whole school and to provide a more rigorous and extensive citizenship programme from September 2005.

Year 8 students gain experience of design and technology through woodwork. Students from Y7 to Y9 attend Islamic history classes covering the period from pre-Islamic Arabia to the Middle Ages. A social studies programme designed for Years 7 and 8 provides a few links with Islamic studies. Students gain experience in the aesthetic and creative areas of learning through English literature, ICT projects, woodwork, *tajweed* (Qur'anic recitation) and practising *nashids* (Islamic songs) for assemblies.

Post-16 students can study full-time or part-time. Either they devote all their time to the memorisation of the Qur'an or they combine this with the *alim* course. Current part-time students also take various courses in local authority colleges.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught mainly through the Islamic curriculum. For example, marriage, family, gender and youth issues are discussed in *fiqh*. During the inspection, students learnt about the teachings of Islamic law as regards birth, breast feeding and child care in a *fiqh* lesson. Cleanliness, personal hygiene, family life, racial discrimination, women's rights, drug awareness and respect for the law are discussed thoroughly in assemblies, *fiqh* and hadith lessons. Relationships with others and respect for others and other religions are mainly covered in hadith and *aqeeda* lessons. For example, during the inspection, students reflected on and discussed respect and care for all forms of Creation through an interactive assembly. Students are given ample opportunities to express their views about such topics in the programme of *tarbiyya* (personal development). The school also provides elements of citizenship through the Islamic studies curriculum, but this is not planned rigorously.

The curriculum is not enriched by educational visits. PE is enhanced by extra-curricular activities

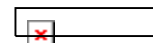
such as friendly football matches with two local schools, hockey, and table tennis but these initiatives are restricted by the lack of facilities.

Students have high expectations for their future. However, the school does not prepare them sufficiently well for the responsibilities of adult life and the next stage of their education. There is no careers programme in place and boys are not made aware of their choices in the range of occupations and training available to them in the future.

There is an adequate curriculum policy setting out the aims, content and assessment opportunities for the Darul Uloom curriculum and the National Curriculum subjects. It is not supported by marking and assessment policies. This deficiency has a negative impact on the quality of assessment. Lesson planning is better supported by schemes of work in some areas of the Darul Uloom curriculum such as Arabic, Urdu and hadith than in others. There are appropriate schemes of work for English, mathematics and science. However, the science schemes of work do not always highlight the skills to be taught. The school has started to develop appropriate schemes of work for PE and to prepare a coherent citizenship programme with cross-curricular links.

The school has drafted a strategic plan aiming at developing the curriculum and raising standards. The present management team has correctly identified the priorities.

The quality of the teaching and assessment



The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In nearly half the lessons observed, the teaching was sound and very few lessons were unsatisfactory. It was good in half the lessons observed, and there are examples of very good teaching in the school. In the good and very good lessons, the teachers demonstrated a secure knowledge of their subject, showed good knowledge of individual students and assessed their students' knowledge and understanding effectively. They asked probing questions to extend students' thinking and kept them actively engaged. In the most successful lessons, teachers used a suitable range of teaching styles matching the students' various learning styles. They planned suitable tasks that matched students' needs closely. They involved students in self-assessment using imaginative methods. This was the case in an Arabic lesson where the teacher consistently challenged all students and communicated his enthusiasm very effectively.

In some satisfactory or weak lessons, the teachers did not provide sufficient language support to meet the needs of the students in the class. PE lessons lack focus because they are not planned according to appropriate schemes of work. In the Darul Uloom subjects, some lesson plans lack detail and include the subject matter to be taught but not the skills. Some lesson plans do not include differentiated tasks to match the needs of individuals. Others do not provide for any evaluation to inform the planning of the next lesson.

There are weaknesses in teaching that are present even in good lessons. For instance, learning objectives are not always shared with the students. Teachers do not always reinforce the learning at the end of the lesson. Teaching methods are not always varied enough, particularly in the Darul Uloom curriculum.

The working relationships between the teachers and the students are very good in the vast majority of lessons. Students' behaviour deteriorated in a few lessons when the teachers' strategies to manage the class were weak. Teachers readily provide appropriate support after school hours for any student who requests it.

The lack of adequate resources has a negative impact on the standards and achievement of students in every subject. A few dedicated staff have worked very hard to collect basic resources

and materials for ICT and science over the years. The situation is particularly critical in science where students perform too few experiments to develop the skills required for GCSE and in English where they do not even have dictionaries. The library cannot support the curriculum and needs updating and developing. For PE, the school makes good use of a local park which provides basic, safe and secure space for games.

In both the Darul Uloom and afternoon curricula, assessment is not rigorous enough. Not all teachers are well informed of students' needs and prior attainments. Teachers who deliver the Darul Uloom curriculum take the prior knowledge and attainment of students into consideration to group them in classes, although this is not so effectively done for post-16 students on the *hifdh* course. Although the school obtains the examination data from the students' primary schools, this information is not used to provide appropriate subject support or to track students' progress in the National Curriculum subjects. In particular, the school has not devised a suitable strategy to meet the specific needs of students learning English as an additional language (EAL) who are the majority in the school. This has a negative impact on their achievement across all subjects. Appropriate homework is set to extend students' learning. Students' work is marked regularly but too hastily to show students how to improve.

Teachers are keen to develop their skills but they have received little training in recent years. Some have correctly identified that they need specific training to sharpen their knowledge and understanding of examination criteria and attainment levels.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

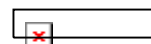
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- appropriate careers guidance (paragraph 1(2)(g));
- adequate preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (1(2)(j));
- resources of an adequate quality, quantity and range (paragraph 1(3)(f));
- a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and ensure that information from such assessment is utilised to plan teaching so that pupils can make progress (paragraph 1(3)(g)); and
- education which enables all pupils within a class to make progress, including pupils with statements and those for whom English is an additional language (paragraph 1(5)).
- should also ensure that:
- teachers have a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons (paragraph 1(3)(d)).

2. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils



The provision for students' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and is one of the strengths of the school. The students' cultural development is well promoted but not enhanced by educational visits. The Islamic ethos of the school strongly permeates the daily lives of its students and has a positive impact on their attitude and behaviour. This is nurtured by the respectful and friendly relationships the teachers have established with their students. Students appreciate the

care which teachers demonstrate by giving them support and advice after school hours.

Students develop self-knowledge through the challenging Darul Uloom curriculum and the Islamic studies syllabus taught in the afternoon. This is well extended by the weekly *tarbiyya* programme which gives students ample opportunities to express their views on topics of their choice and to develop good public speaking skills. Students are proud of their Islamic identity, have strong self-esteem and self-confidence. Teachers value students' work as evidenced by the attractive displays in classrooms and corridors.

Students gain an understanding of right and wrong through Qur'anic studies, hadith, *fiqh* and other subjects of the Darul Uloom curriculum. For instance, they look into crime, violence, justice, the rights of the individual and the welfare of society and other related topics. This is reinforced in daily assemblies.

A comprehensive Islamic education, coupled with an effective good behaviour policy, encourages students to accept responsibility for their behaviour. This is suitably supplemented by a well thought-out programme of PSHE. Health officials have visited the school to talk about health and safety, smoking and drugs. The programme also covers personal finance, sex and relationships education, nutrition and physical activity, as well as mental and physical health. Year 11 students, who have an excellent record for attendance, behaviour and academic achievement, are given the opportunity to contribute to school life through the duties of prefects. Students also demonstrate their initiative by collecting money for charities, for instance towards the victims of the recent tsunami disaster.

The school provides elements of citizenship through the Islamic studies curriculum. For instance, there are many opportunities for students to draw parallels between the taxation system in Islamic law and that used in the UK and the two judicial systems. However, this is not planned rigorously and does not provide a sufficiently broad general knowledge of public institutions in England. By extending the school day from next September, the school plans to offer a more rigorous citizenship programme.

Students learn about other cultures and religions, in the afternoon Islamic studies lessons as well as in English, *aqeeda*, hadith, social studies and ICT. The school has hosted several inter-faith meetings and students enjoy this experience. The school is a multicultural environment that provides good opportunities for cultural enrichment. Appreciation of British culture is gained mainly through English literature and creative ICT activities. For instance, Year 7 and 8 students learnt about Lent and pancake making in the course of an ICT project. The cultural development of students is not enhanced by educational visits. The school has forged links with two local schools with which it has friendly football matches. However, links with the wider community are under-developed.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

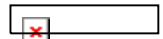
The school meets all the requirements except one.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 2(d)).

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils



The welfare, health and safety of the students are promoted effectively. There are suitable policies in place for child protection, bullying, health and safety, and health and safety on educational activities outside school. Teachers are adequately trained to implement these policies. During the inspection, all teachers attended training in child protection and arrangements have been made for all to train in health and safety in March 2005.

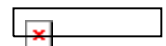
The boys are treated in a fair and friendly manner by the staff and good behaviour is encouraged through every subject of the Darul Uloom curriculum. The school also has a behaviour policy which promotes good behaviour effectively. The relationship between staff and students is generally very good. Students are very happy in the school and take great interest in school matters.

There is a suitable fire procedure in place. Fire drills are held regularly and recorded. Fire extinguishers are regularly checked and well maintained. The boys are appropriately supervised throughout the school day to ensure their health, safety and well being throughout the day.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff



The school meets nearly all the requirements for checking the suitability of staff. The school is run by a charitable trust. It is managed by a board of trustees and governed by eight governors. Most staff have been checked with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) for their suitability to work with children. The CRB is processing the most recent applications and the school is awaiting confirmation of these checks.

Procedures for appointing staff have been updated by the recently appointed secretary. Identity and medical fitness are confirmed. However, in a few cases, the school has not yet checked qualifications or obtained written professional and character references for some staff.

All teachers are suitably qualified in the subject they teach. All hold university degrees or higher qualifications.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

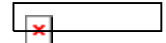
No.

What does the school need to do to comply with the regulations?

In order to comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2003 the school should:

- ensure that prior to the appointment of all staff, appropriate checks have been carried out to confirm their identity, medical fitness, previous employment history, character references and, where appropriate, qualifications and professional references, and that this information has been taken into account in determining whether their appointment will be confirmed (paragraph 4(c)).

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation



The school meets all the requirements for premises and accommodation. It is housed in a mosque complex and all the teaching accommodation is located on the ground floor. The whole building is maintained in a reasonable condition and the area the school uses is in good decorative order.

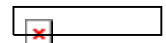
The classrooms are situated in a self-contained area providing seclusion from the public mosque space. Specialist rooms include a prayer hall that doubles as a PE hall, a science laboratory, a design and technology workshop and an attractively refurbished and spacious ICT room. Students bring packed lunches which are collected in large plastic containers every morning and stored in a cool, hygienic kitchen until lunch time. Students sit for their lunch in a well decorated dining room that provides a very congenial environment conducive to socialising. The toilet and wudu (ritual ablution) areas are shared with the mosque and sufficient toilet facilities are assigned for the sole use of the school's students. Appropriate arrangements are made to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of students while they use the mosque facilities. A suitably furnished room situated near the school office and a bathroom on the upper floor is designated as a medical room. There are sufficient toilet and washing facilities for staff. There is a suitable, well fenced outdoor area just outside the classrooms that provides safe play at lunch time.

The school has suitable plans to refurbish an adjacent building that would provide further teaching accommodation and facilities for physical activities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners



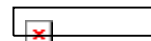
The quality of information for parents and others is satisfactory. The school informs parents and prospective parents of its procedures and details of its curriculum through the school handbook. It encourages parents to meet teachers informally and to make appointments to see any staff they wish to meet. However, a small minority of parents do not feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions, suggestions or a problem.

The school informs parents of their son's progress through an annual report and an annual parents' evening. Not all parents feel they are kept well informed of their child's progress. The annual achievement reports are adequate but they do not make it clear whether the standards reported are based on the national norms or not. Parents also have the opportunity to meet staff and community leaders at an annual presentation day.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

7. The effectiveness of the school's procedures for handling complaints

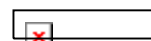


The school has produced a detailed and clear complaints policy. A copy of the policy is kept in the school office and is available on request. A summary of the procedure is printed in the school handbook which has been recently updated and distributed to all parents. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, the majority of parents said that they understood the school's procedure for dealing with complaints. There was no complaint registered under the formal procedure in the last academic year. Complaints are usually resolved informally.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

School details



Name of school:	Darul Uloom Islamic High School	
DfES ref number:	330/6078	
Type of school:	Muslim day school	
Status:	Independent	
Age range of pupils:	11 - 19 years	
Gender of pupils:	Boys	
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	Boys 68	Total 68
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need:	Boys 0	Total 0
Annual fees (day pupils):	£1,020 - £1,200	
Address of school:	521 - 527 Coventry Road Small Heath Birmingham B10 0LL	
Telephone number:	0121 772 6408	
Fax number:	0121 773 4340	
Headteacher:	Dr Abdur Rahim	
Proprietor:	Jami Mosque & Islamic Centre (B'ham) Trustees Ltd	
Chair of the governing body:	Mr M Noor	
Lead Inspector:	Mrs M Messaoudi	
Dates of inspection:	7 - 10 February 2005	

