

Inspection report

Darul Uloom Leicester

Independent school

DfES ref no: 856/6004

Inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 March 2006

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by the Office for Standards in Education under Section 162A 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 Leicester was founded in 1992 as an independent educational institute for boys. It combines a college of higher Islamic education and a secondary school with boarding. It offers secondary and further education, as well as advanced Islamic education. This prepares students to become imams or Islamic scholars. Darul Uloom Leicester therefore caters for an age group from 12 to 23. It aims:

'to provide a high quality Islamic education in a safe and secure Islamic environment and to develop its students' full potential through a love of learning;

'to nurture self-respect and confidence and to raise the self esteem of its pupils as Muslims enabling them to integrate successfully in the multicultural society without compromising their Islamic beliefs and values; and

'to be a centre of academic excellence, increasing pupils' opportunity of entering into higher education.'

The school timetable provides subjects reflecting Islamic and secular education at Key Stages 3 and 4. Students study General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General Certificate of Education examinations at Advanced level (A/S and A levels).

Summary of main findings

Darul Uloom Leicester is a good school which is achieving its aims. Its students receive a balanced education thus providing them with the option of choosing either Islamic higher education or entrance to British universities. The lessons are mostly good and sometimes outstanding. Dedicated teachers demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of their subject matter. They employ a good range of ways to teach it effectively. Staff and pupils have very good rapport. Pupils are very proud of their school and its achievements. The pupils enjoy good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their welfare, health and safety are very effectively sought by the school. The premises have enabled the school to achieve its aims; they are only just big enough for a boarding school with the current numbers of pupils. The accommodation is of sufficient quality to support students' learning properly.

What the school does well:

- it provides a first class Islamic education;

- the curriculum policy is clear and well laid out with especially outstanding schemes of work in science and mathematics;
- the quality of teaching in both the secular and Islamic curriculum is good in all year groups and is sometimes outstanding;
- pupils' behaviour is outstanding; and
- pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

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

- it should devise a risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997.

Next Steps

Whilst not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- to expand the teaching and boarding accommodation available and thus relieve pressure on the current space which is near its limit in places ; and
- to further increase the range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS FOR REGISTRATION

1. The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of the curriculum

The school's curriculum is good; it is divided between the secular curriculum subjects and Islamic studies. The two parts combine to form a cohesive whole, providing good breadth and a reasonable balance.

The curriculum policy is clear and well laid out. The school has an effective range of schemes of work for subjects, which provide a sound basis for planning and delivery of effective education for the school's pupils. The mathematics scheme is outstanding. It contains clear aims and objectives, with ideas for learning activities and teaching methods, for pupil support and extension materials. Within each topic there are suggestions for starters to lessons and a useful range of plenary activities as well as literacy and vocabulary prompts.

The schemes for Key Stage 4 science and for A/S level science and for sociology are also outstanding.

The English scheme of work provides a good overview of learning objectives and teaching time, supported by hand-written tables based on the commercial scheme used in the lessons. The history scheme is related clearly to the school's cultural and religious interests and its teaching objectives for each topic are set out in detail. The information and communication technology (ICT) scheme of work is satisfactory with the topics outlined for each week offering a good basis for lesson planning. The curriculum for physical education is also satisfactory, outlining programmes for each year group's sport experience. The citizenship curriculum includes clear objectives with learning activities suggested for Years 7, 8 and 9. It also outlines the careers education by topic.

The Islamic studies programme is very good. Its provision for Islamic curriculum and Arabic language is broad and balanced. The six years long programme of Islamic theology aims to enable students to achieve the status of an imam or an *alim* (scholar). This part of the school curriculum is offered in mixed age groups. This takes into consideration each individual's prior and present spiritual and moral achievements. Students in the final years of this programme are above compulsory school age.

The Islamic theology programme includes Qur'anic studies including *tafseer*, (translation and interpretation) *tajweed*, (recitation) *tahfeez* (memorisation). *Hadith* (the traditions of the prophet in regard with what the Prophet did, said or approved) and its related topics in detail. In *fiqh* (applied Islamic theology), teachers debate other major schools of thought, and contemporary issues. This is mainly from the *Hanafi School* – one of four main Sunni schools of thought. In this topic almost every aspect of social life is discussed properly. The programme also includes *aqeedah* (beliefs), *seerah* (life of the prophet), Islamic History and Arabic Language with all its linguistic components such as literature, syntax and morphology.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good. Most lessons are carefully planned and teaching is delivered effectively by teachers well-equipped for the task with appropriate expertise in both the methods of teaching and their subject. Outstanding work was seen in science at Key Stage 4 where pupils used computer simulations to explore the science of electromagnetism. In ICT, Year 7 pupils made very attractive presentations. They used a range of sophisticated animation techniques for projection programs, while learning how to time their picture transitions effectively. Good practical investigations were conducted by Year 8 pupils into the rate of cooling water under different physical conditions. During an outstandingly good geography lesson, pupils used role-play to explore issues relating to migration. In art, pupils were well taught the Japanese art of origami or sculpture using paper folding. Outstanding coaching in association football helped pupils to develop very accurately both long and short passing skills, having the dual effect of helping them to score goals in matches and good marks in their GCSE practical assessment. Teaching in each year group was seen to be good. In every subject the high quality teaching enables pupils to make sound progress while being presented with appropriate levels of challenge in their learning activities. Effective assessment systems are in place to enable teachers to judge the levels of understanding of their pupils and to pace their work accordingly. The benefits of a well written scheme of work were seen in both mathematics and science. Lessons were seen to have a range of interesting starts, and clear objectives meant that pupils were fully aware both what they had learnt, and achieved. As part of the effective system of quality assurance for teaching, the school operates its own internal system of lesson observations.

The school has good and effective systems for assessment. It conducts internal tests quietly and efficiently, most pupils seeing this as a normal part of learning. Pupils are well prepared for public examinations. Assessment links are effectively reported to parents. This means that they are fully aware of their child's progress and can work together on his strengths, both to raise achievement still further and to rectify any weaknesses.

Teaching in Islamic studies is good. The teachers are caring, courteous and well qualified in their subject. The students appreciate their teachers' efforts, and have great respect for them. Most teachers in this subject area are locally trained and are aware of their educational, cultural and social needs. Partly as a result of this, working relationships between students and their teachers are very good. Teachers are well informed of students' educational needs and their prior attainments. The planning in this section is very good.

Islamic studies provide links with other areas of the school curriculum, for example, some of the subjects from the National Curriculum were seen being discussed by the teachers in Islamic studies lessons. The school systematically conducts its final annual exams for each subject in Islamic studies. The results are circulated to parents. There are enough resources for all the students' educational needs. A list of extra-curricular activities shows a number of educational visits and excursions and some sporting competitions. However, the questionnaires and a number of parents' letters show that they would value a greater range of extra curricular activities.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

The school's provision for the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It meets all its aims in this respect very well. It does indeed *'provide a high quality Islamic education in a safe and secure Islamic environment'* Very good examples were seen of many of its pupils' love of learning.

The spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils and students is taken very seriously. The school stresses the need for punctuality of prayers five times a day. After each prayer, there is a short input from the students themselves. In the afternoon assembly, held after *Zuhur* (afternoon prayer), short presentations of a religious or spiritual nature are discussed. In the evening, homework time provides students with opportunities both to learn and to reflect upon their day's work.

A prefect system is also in place preparing students for future adulthood responsibilities. The system of pastoral care provides an excellent opportunity for all students to learn from each other. Senior students learn how to support their younger fellow students. Partly as a result of the successful discipline policy, behaviour is excellent throughout the school. There is a very good reward system in place. Successful students are awarded vouchers for the school shop.

Within the Islamic Studies curriculum, moral and spiritual teaching is the main focus. Through the teaching, students are encouraged to respect Islamic values as well as the British law. The curriculum and Islamic studies combine effectively to enable the students to distinguish right from wrong.

The school makes great efforts for its students to participate actively in the life of their own community and of other faith communities. The school offers a list of activities to improve this part of provision for its students. For example, it has a radio broadcasting system through which students transmit their own programmes to the local community. The students offer religious services, and visits to other faith communities. There is close involvement and contact with the city council, as well as links with a local mosque and school.

In citizenship, history and other subjects, students study some of the public institutions and services in England. They are encouraged to read daily newspapers kept in the library and to listen to the news on the radio.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

3. The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school promotes the welfare and health of the students very well. There are clear policies for child protection, bullying, health and safety, including those relating

to out of school visits. These are all included in an admirably comprehensive but clear staff handbook. All members of staff are aware of the child protection policy and of correct procedures. Staff and prefects attend Child Protection courses and this is part of the induction process for new members of staff. There is a designated member of staff for child protection, who is also responsible for dealing with student complaints.

The school has a clear anti-bullying policy which identifies the measures that the school will take to prevent bullying. Students are aware of the nature and consequences of bullying and how to report it to boarding supervisors, prefects or staff members. They report that the system is effective. There is detailed guidance concerning behaviour, discipline and sanctions, outlined in the staff handbook, including details of which sanctions are permitted and which are prohibited. The school keeps good records of sanctions imposed for serious disciplinary offences. Students are supervised well and appropriately throughout the school.

The school has no up to date fire risk assessment document. However, all staff are issued with guidance about crisis management, which includes details of what is expected of staff and students if a fire should occur. Regular fire practices are recorded with the date and time and some evaluation. Fire extinguishers are regularly inspected. The school has a good First Aid policy with good numbers of trained First Aiders.

The admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with regulations. The admissions register is now kept in a well ordered book designed for the purpose. The school has completed the process of entering the attendance registers, hitherto kept in a loose-leaf folder, into a conformable system.

All items noted in the last Department for Education and Skills (DfES) letter have been corrected for some years now. The five-a-side football pitch has been paved; indeed, it is now approaching a time when it will need some further attention to levelling. The school's provision conforms to the DfES guidance: 'Safeguarding Children in Education'.

The last CSCI inspection in February 2005 made two recommendations and the school has acted on both. It has now a clear system and guidance for the dispensation of medicines and all electrical equipment on the premises. The school complies fully with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

The school meets all but one of the requirements.

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 a satisfactory level of fire safety, identified by a risk assessment under the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997(paragraph 3(5)).*

4. The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school takes the checking of its staff very seriously. All staff and other adults in contact with students and boarding pupils have been subject to satisfactory clearance by the Criminal Records Bureau at enhanced levels, and to checks against List 99. All the necessary references are taken up fully and securely recorded in writing.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

5. The suitability of the premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are satisfactory and suitable for the school's educational and boarding purposes. The school is accommodated in a listed building which is well maintained and clean. There is a small science laboratory designed on Nuffield science principles with a practical area and an area for writing and theory work. The school has a good ICT room. Both rooms are well equipped with a good range of resources. The dining hall is well organised and adequate. The mosque is also used for assembly and for homework. Classrooms and offices are well decorated. There are some useful and effective displays, particularly in the mathematics, science and ICT rooms. The building is properly heated and well lighted, and there is good sanitary provision for both healthy and religious purposes. A medical room is equipped with all required facilities and a qualified First Aid officer is always on duty. Most classrooms are at the upper limit in terms of the size of classes that use them. The boarding accommodation is attractive, comfortable and fit for purpose, but is only just big enough for the current number of boarders. The school has a very good plan which meets the needs of the Disability Discrimination Act (2002)

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

6. The quality of information for parents and other partners

The school provides a good range of information for parents and others. It publishes a prospectus in which the name and address of the headteacher are printed, and in which the ethos and aims of the school are clearly outlined. A detailed handbook provides clear guidance for all parents and pupils. A comprehensive staff handbook is in use and contains all the required information on policy and procedures. The school provides helpful annual and mid-year reports for parents of the progress and attainment of their child. These include progress reports that outline behaviour, punctuality, effort, and achievement both in class and in homework. Separate reports provide details of pupils' achievements in both the Islamic and the secular curriculum.

Particulars of academic performance during the preceding year, including GCSE and A/S and A Level results, are attached to the prospectus.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

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

The school's complaints procedure meets the requirements of the regulations very well. It is clearly set out in the school's *'Pupil and Parent Guide'* for the benefit of pupils, and for parents and others. All pupils who were asked said that they knew that there was someone they could turn to at times of trouble. Copies of the complaints procedure are available for prospective parents, and are referred to in the prospectus. In the parental questionnaire completed prior to the inspection, only five per cent of parents said that they did not understand the school's system for handling complaints. The school has a good system ready to record any complaints, but has received no formal complaints in the last year.

Does the school meet the requirements for registration?

Yes.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Darul Uloom School, Leicester
DfES Number:	856/6004
Type of school:	Secondary Boarding
Status:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	12 – 23 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
Number on roll (full-time pupils):	128
Number of boarders:	54
Annual fees (day pupils):	£1,200
Annual fees (boarders):	£1,800
Address of school:	119 Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5LN
Telephone number:	0116 266 8922
Fax number:	0116 299 2458
Email address:	darulloomleicester@btconnect.com
Principal:	Mr Ismail Patel
Headteacher:	Mr Shafiq Latif
Proprietor:	Board of Trustees
Reporting Inspector:	Mr Neville Grenyer
Date of inspection:	17 - 30 March 2006

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