

Inspection of Darul Madinah

50 Darvills Lane, Slough SL1 2PH

Inspection dates: 2 to 5 July 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto of 'nurturing learners, making a positive contribution and championing faith' is highly evident. From the minute they join the school, staff make sure that everyone feels part of the close-knit Darul Madinah family. Staff get to know the pupils and their families very well. This helps everyone feel happy and safe. Pupils benefit from highly individualised support in this small but growing school.

Staff share the same high ambition for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's underpinning values are apparent in the way pupils behave. They are highly respectful of each other and are proud of their inclusive school. Older pupils look out for younger children in the playground. The recent addition of a 'friendship bench' helps everyone feel included.

Children settle into Reception quickly. They learn to be independent from the outset. Caring staff teach them school routines and expectations. Across all year groups, pupils focus well during lessons and do not disrupt each other's learning. Parents are positive about the school and value the individual support their children receive. Many commented about how dedicated and caring the staff are. One parent, typical of many, told inspectors, 'My child loves coming to this school and is thriving here.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The proprietor and staff are unwavering in their aspiration and commitment to provide an ambitious quality of education. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school has prioritised reading, writing and mathematics to ensure that children in the early years get off to the best possible start. In some subjects, particularly in English and mathematics, the school has thought carefully about how learning builds over time. The needs of pupils with SEND are expertly identified and shared with staff. In some lessons, particularly in core subjects, support for pupils with SEND is strong. However, in the wider curriculum, the school has not yet completed its curriculum thinking fully. This means that not all staff are trained to adapt the curriculum to meet all pupils' needs sufficiently well. This includes the curriculum beyond Year 4, as staff prepare to open the school to subsequent year groups. This is due, in part, to the school still being at an early stage of development. In most other areas, the school has planned for expansion carefully. Suitable policies, routines and accommodation are in place, ready to be used.

Overall, pupils achieve well. Expert teachers present new knowledge and skills proficiently. In some subjects, teachers design activities that help pupils remember their learning successfully. However, this is not yet embedded across all subjects, as teachers do not always revisit and recap key content learned previously. They do not check that pupils have remembered vital knowledge and skills consistently well. In these subjects some pupils, including those with SEND, do not always learn as well as they could.

Reading is a priority because the school has placed it at the heart of the curriculum. Lessons are rich in literacy. Staff teach reading skilfully. Daily phonics lessons ensure that pupils learn to read effectively. The books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds they learn. Books are plentiful in the school and pupils cherish reading for pleasure. Expert staff encourage everyone to read fluently, using their 'story telling voices.' Staff model this by reading to children regularly.

The school expects pupils to behave well and they do. Staff help pupils understand the importance of good behaviour. Occasionally, the tasks teachers set are not sufficiently challenging so a small number of pupils lose focus. Attendance is strong. The school is diligent in monitoring absence and punctuality. Staff support families proactively when pupils' attendance falls below the school's high expectations.

Pupils' personal development is prioritised. Well-planned opportunities on 'Creative Fridays' enhance pupils' academic studies. Pupils experience a range of activities designed to develop and improve social and emotional well-being. Visits from the police and fire services help pupils to learn about the work of these services. Trips to a local farm and to adventure playgrounds develop vital skills of confidence and teamwork. Pupils learn about other faiths and they embrace cultural diversity. Visits enhance the curriculum and help develop crucial knowledge and understanding of what it is like to grow up in modern Britain. For example, a recent trip to the local church highlighted the similarities and differences between pupils' own faith and that of other people. The school promotes positive physical and mental health. The school day is punctuated with calm periods of reflection and energetic bursts of physical activity at breaktimes. A small and growing number of pupils make up the school council. They value debating ideas to help improve their school.

The proprietor holds the headteacher to account in regular and thorough meetings. Together, they scrutinise the school's work and development. In line with the growth of the school, the development of leadership roles and responsibilities is not yet complete. Subject leadership is embryonic. The headteacher currently maintains oversight of all subjects. The school does not yet have regular and systematic processes in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. The school's statutory duties, including compliance with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, are conducted effectively. Dedicated staff are highly positive about the school. They support the aims of the school fully. They feel a sense of pride in their contribution to the growing school. Staff report that workload is manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and the proprietor)

- Work to develop the wider curriculum is very recent and in some cases is yet to be reviewed. This means that not all staff adapt their teaching to enable all

pupils, including pupils with SEND, to learn the ambitious curriculum as well as they could. The school needs to complete its work to develop the curriculum in full and ensure all staff are trained to deliver it effectively.

- Not all teachers check what pupils know or remember systematically. As a result, teachers do not select appropriate activities to enable pupils to build their learning over time securely. The school needs to ensure that all teachers accurately identify gaps and misconceptions and adapt their subsequent lessons to rectify these.
- Subject leadership roles and responsibilities in the wider curriculum have yet to be fully developed. As a result, rigorous staff training, monitoring and evaluation in these subjects is not yet in place. As the school continues to grow, the proprietor should ensure that subject leaders are appointed and equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills to conduct their roles effectively.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

School details

Unique reference number	147293
DfE registration number	871/6005
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	10322073
Type of school	School with a religious characteristic
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	4 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Darul Madinah Slough Ltd
Chair	Waqas Choudhery
Headteacher	Sofia Nasir
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800
Telephone number	01753 553841
Website	https://dmslough.co.uk
Email address	slough@darulmadinah.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	9 to 11 November 2021

Information about this school

- Darul Madinah School is co-educational independent day school. The school has an Islamic religious character.
- The school is in an urban part of Slough, Berkshire. A registered nursery, Darul Madinah Nursery School, operates from another part of the same building. The nursery has a separate entrance to the school and is inspected separately. The school and nursery have the same proprietor.
- The school shares its site with a community centre run by the Pakistan Welfare Association.
- The last standard inspection took place between 9 and 11 September 2021 when the school was judged to be good and meeting all the standards. Since then, the school has received a material change inspection in July 2023 when it applied successfully to increase its roll to the current capacity of 80 pupils.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and teaching and support staff at the school. The lead inspector met with the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: Early reading; mathematics; personal, social and health education and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and support staff, spoke to a few pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work. Inspectors also visited other lessons and looked at pupils' work from other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour on arrival at school and during visits to classrooms and the outside space.

- Inspectors considered the views of parents expressed in Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents. Inspectors considered the views of staff during meetings with them and through the staff survey. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils through observations of their behaviour and through informal discussions with them.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors carried out other activities to check that the school meets the independent school standards. These included a check of the school premises and wider work to comply with health and safety laws (including fire safety). Inspectors considered the school's approach to risk management. Inspectors also checked the relevant policies and the school website.

The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils

The school has applied to the Department for Education (DfE) to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decides to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- The school has requested to increase the maximum number of pupils from 80 to 114. The school has also requested to change the age range of pupils from 4-9 to 4-11. The school is well-equipped to manage this increase to pupil numbers and age range. School leaders and the proprietor have been working through their phased plan to increase numbers year-on-year.
- The school has carefully considered the additional staffing needed for this expansion. Robust recruitment procedures are followed precisely. The school has already increased the capacity of the teaching accommodation. Additional new staff, including subject specialists in key stage 2, are about to be appointed for September 2024 in readiness for the planned increase in pupil numbers.

Information about the material change inspection

- The lead inspector considered the implications of the proposed increase in pupil numbers when looking at evidence relating to the school's compliance with the independent school standards. This included considering whether arrangements for safeguarding, health and safety and supervision (part 3), suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (part 4), accommodation (part 5) and provision of information (part 6) would remain fit for purpose if the material change request is granted. The lead inspector also considered the implications of the change in age range of pupils when looking at evidence relating to the school's compliance with the independent school standards. This included considering whether

arrangements for the quality of education provided (part 1), spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (part 2) and leadership and management (part 8) would remain fit for purpose if the material change request is granted. The lead inspector also confirmed that the school's safeguarding policy was published on the school's website as required (part 6).

Inspection team

Linda Culling, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jo Brinkley

His Majesty's Inspector

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