

Jamea Al Kauthar

Ashton Road, Lancaster, LA1 5AJ

Inspection dates	23–25 April 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This school is inadequate because

- Leadership and management are inadequate for both boarding and education because, despite some recent changes, overtime leaders have not fully ensured the welfare and safety of students.
- Welfare, health and safety for both boarding and education are inadequate because insufficient attention is paid to ensuring fire safety and health and safety issues once identified are rectified in a timely manner.
- Although there is a current on-going programme of improvements in place the school's accommodation and facilities do not meet the required standards. Some areas have insufficient heating and other areas are in a poor state of repair.
- Not all of the school's records are up to date or contain all appropriate information. For example some student's medical records were not up to date and assessments of risk did not contain sufficient detail.
- Despite these serious concerns about the quality of the accommodation and facilities provided students and staff are consistently highly positive about these aspects of the school. They do not question, recognise or challenge the shortcomings identified by the inspection even when what is provided by the school does not meet regulations or National Minimum Standards.
- Leaders and managers have accepted the highly positive feedback from students and staff and have not sufficiently encouraged students and staff to engage in open debate on how to improve all aspects of school life.

The school has the following strengths

- Teaching is good because teachers set high expectations and plan lessons to engage and motivate students. As a result they make good progress and receive a good balance of Islamic studies and secular education and
- Students' personal development is outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary. They are taught to be independent learners and respectful and tolerant towards each other as well as of other cultures and beliefs.

they are highly positive about their about their learning.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

- The school requires improvement and must take action to meet schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards)(England)Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.
- The school does not meet the national minimum standards for boarding schools. The details are listed in the full report.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with no notice.
- Inspectors undertook two learning walks and observed 17 part lessons taught by 16 teachers. Some were observed jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings took place with the Principal, the head of school, head of boarding who is also head of the madrassa, and other staff. Inspectors also met students formally and informally.
- Inspectors examined students' work and a range of documentation including policies, risk assessments, schemes of work and staff training records.
- The inspectors considered 25 staff questionnaires, 81 responses to Parent View and Point-in-Time surveys completed by 13 students for education provision, and 390 students and 22 staff for boarding.

Inspection team

Angela Corbett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mohammad Ismail

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Full report

Information about this school

- Jamea Al Kauthar is a Muslim boarding school for girls, founded in 1996, providing both an Islamic and a secular education. There are currently 390 girls on roll, all of whom board, with some coming from overseas. A few students are at an early stage of learning English and none have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school is registered for students aged from 11 to 20 years with around half above compulsory school age. The ages of current students range from 11 to 23 years.
- The school occupies the former Royal Albert Hospital buildings, an historic and extensive site not far from the centre of Lancaster. It comprises the main building which houses the boarding facilities, a main hall, a library, two classrooms and administrative areas, a single storey building where pupils receive their secular education and the two-storey madrasa building, where most of the Islamic curriculum is taught. There are some additional buildings on site which are currently not in use.
- The school aims to instil religious and moral values and produce independent individuals who are sensitive to the needs of others. The school is owned by the Albadr Islamic Trust and the Chair of the Trustees is also the Principal.
- The school operates an admission policy of selection by ability. All attend Islamic theology courses each morning, with the older students studying for a Master's-level equivalent qualification. Some students stay beyond the age of 20, in order to complete the six year course. All students in Key Stages 3 and 4 follow secular courses in the afternoon as do many of sixth form age or older.
- Sixth form teaching is led and managed by staff from Preston Sixth Form College with whom the school has partnership arrangements. A programme leader is based in the school most afternoons.
- The students are exclusively taught and looked after by female staff, many of whom are former students of the school. Most of the boarding staff who directly care for the girls are also teachers and reside in one of the four boarding houses. Almost all of the auxiliary staff are male.
- The school's most recent full inspection of education and boarding took place in January 2010. An unannounced emergency visit was made in March 2013 at the request of the Department for Education (DfE) following concerns raised about the welfare, health and safety of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - making greater use of information and communication technology (ICT) to aid learning in the secular subjects
 - ensuring that teachers and students consistently have opportunities to follow up on advice given through marking.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - enhancing enrichment opportunities both within and beyond the school day, in particular through a greater range of off-site visits and experiences
 - developing and implementing a policy to ensure the needs of gifted and talented students are fully met.
- Develop more robust systems for monitoring all aspects of health and safety in relation to the school's premises so that the Trustees and school leaders prioritise and act speedily to address

concerns.

- The school must meet the following independent school standards:
 - ensure arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders and also have regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools (paragraph 8)
 - ensure that the school’s policy complies with relevant health and safety laws and is fully implemented (paragraph 11)
 - ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005¹ (paragraph 13)
 - ensure suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for the sole use of pupils (paragraph 23A(1)(a))
 - ensure that the school’s accommodation and facilities are maintained to a sufficient standard to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils (paragraph 23C)
 - ensure that toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water (paragraph 23F(1)(b))
 - ensure that the school provides accommodation that has regard to standard 5 of the national minimum standards for boarding schools (paragraph 23H).

- The school must meet the following national minimum standards for boarding schools:
 - ensure suitable toilet and washing facilities are provided for boarders, which are reasonably accessible from the sleeping accommodation. Separate toilet facilities are provided for boys and girls unless each toilet facility is provided in a separate room intended for use by one pupil at a time, the door to which is capable of being secured from inside. Toilet and washing facilities provide appropriate privacy for boarders (NMS 5.3)
 - ensure that the boarding houses and other accommodation provided for boarders is appropriately lit, heated and ventilated, cleaned and maintained, and reasonable adjustments are made to provide adequate accessible accommodation for any boarders with restricted mobility (NMS 5.4)
 - ensure the school has a written policy on compliance with relevant health and safety laws which is effectively implemented (NMS 6.1)
 - ensure the school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (NMS 6.2)
 - ensure the school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (as referenced in the ‘Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards’) (NMS 7.1)
 - ensure the records specified in Appendix 2 (Boarding Schools National Minimum Standards) are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate (NMS 13.3).

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2005/1541/contents/made.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

The achievement of students of all age groups is good because of consistently good teaching across all curriculum areas. Over the past three years, almost all students have achieved five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics; this represents good progress for all students, and outstanding for some, from their often above average starting points. Achievement in Urdu is outstanding with almost 75% achieving high GCSE grades in 2012. In 2012 there was some variation in achievement in the sixth form courses, such as lower performance in accounting and health and social care at AS level. Preston College staff are addressing this through well-planned actions that include new programme leadership and additional support for students. Current college data suggest the variation in performance has been reduced and that the large majority of students are making good progress. Students also make good and for some outstanding progress in Islamic Studies. They develop a good theological and practical understanding of Islam. Most achieve the alimah (Islamic scholar) diploma. Students make good progress in learning to speak and write in Arabic and many learn to recite the Qur'an.

Students are extremely diligent in both their Islamic and secular studies because the school places equal importance on both aspects. They are very enthusiastic learners, show high levels of concentration in lessons, help each other to learn and are able to work independently as reflected in their exceptionally well-presented and high quality work. All students are expected to make above average progress and any students at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and given appropriate support. Teachers are skilful at ensuring that those who speak English as an additional language also secure good progress. Students say that teachers will help them at any time, including at weekends, so that they can achieve well. Students develop excellent basic skills, including reading and writing. This is reflected, for example, in their above average English literature GCSE results and in the very moving poems they have recently written for submission to a poetry competition, many of which reflect current issues such as one on war which showed high levels of compassion and no bias. These and the breadth of other activities offered to students equip them well for future learning.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Outstanding

Students' behaviour and personal development are outstanding. The Islamic curriculum is a major contributing factor to this and helps students to become confident, mature, extremely polite, courteous and compassionate young women. They are respectful of each other's feelings and offer support, for example providing comfort and reassurances to those who may be feeling homesick and older students taking on the responsibility of helping younger ones to settle in. Cultural and moral development are both outstanding. Students have strong sense of right and wrong both personally and in relation to the wider world. They get on exceptionally well with both staff and each other, show excellent social skills, and comment that the wide range of national and international backgrounds helps them to learn about other cultures. They openly speak about their religion and are keen to share their faith with others seeking to promote understanding, tolerance and harmony both in the community local to the school and where they come from. They have a strong pride in and an affiliation to the school, enjoy the boarding experience and say this is 'my home, my life', and there is 'nothing like Jamea, it is an amazing school'. As a result inspectors found that students spoke positively about the schools achievements even in areas where the school could do better. They appreciate opportunities to talk to visitors about the school and to seek their views. Students' spiritual awareness is highly developed and they show a strong commitment to their faith as well as appreciating the world around them.

Students are aware of current issues and develop a reasonably broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England, particularly through access to news and good personal,

citizenship, social and health education and assembly programmes. They are consulted on a range of issues through the school council. Boarders are pleased that this consultation has brought about changes within school, such as revising the school menus. They talk knowledgably about the charities they are supporting and the reasons for this, and were keen to tell inspectors about the charity events they are organising and how they have made items to sell. Students have exceptionally positive attitudes to their studies, are exceptionally punctual and talk frequently about their love of lessons and learning. Nonetheless, they also delight in meal times which are very sociable occasions. They make excellent use of their limited free time, participating in out of lesson activities such as sport, games, access to ICT, cooking club and talent shows. Students contribute well to school life and develop independent living skills by managing their weekly pocket money, helping out around school, keeping their rooms tidy and managing their own laundry.

Quality of teaching

Good

The consistently good teaching and sometime outstanding teaching enables students to make good progress both in their secular and Islamic studies. Both school and college staff are highly committed, are excellent role models for students, have good knowledge of examination course requirements and appropriate subject level for the level of courses they teach. Many teachers in the school are former students of the school and new to teaching. They are keen to improve their practice and routinely share ideas and undertake training. For example, they undertook training in the autumn term on how to plan lessons with active learning tasks. The impact of such training is evident in their lesson planning. As a result, they make very good use of lesson time using a good range of different approaches and activities. These include group and paired work, peer assessment and presentations which develop students' independent learning skills as well as their knowledge and understanding. A good range of resources enhance learning in secular lessons but insufficient use is made of ICT to support teaching.

The teaching of Islamic studies is also good. Teachers take a modernising approach while retaining Islamic learning traditions. They use a good balance of English, Arabic and Urdu, and make use of a wide range of approaches, such as role play and exemplifying concepts relevant to students' current life experiences. All teaching is whole class, but group and paired work are frequently used. In both secular and Islamic studies, teachers skilfully use questioning to check and develop understanding. On a few occasions teachers accept short answers or do not challenge students thinking to fully extend their learning.

Assessment systems are extremely well established and teachers have an accurate view of how well students are performing in all subjects. Books are regularly marked and students provided with sound advice on how to improve which supports their good learning well. However, students do not consistently act upon, or teachers respond to, the advice that is given.

The head of boarding and head of school work very closely together and communication between care and education is effective, which helps to provide consistent support. Students value the additional support given by teachers, most of whom are the staff that also provide care, to help them with their studies.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The curriculum for both secular and Islamic studies is good. The main Islamic studies course is taught over five to six years and aims to develop an in-depth understanding of the Deen (way of life). Although teaching is according to ability and stage of learning, older and younger students are taught separately. At the start, students learn Urdu and Arabic and are introduced to Islamic subjects. Students then move to a four-year Islamic theology course which leads to an alimah (Islamic scholar) diploma. In the final two years students study focuses on the Prophet's (PBUH)

traditions, Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) and Tafseer (commentary of the Qur'an). Some sixth form students follow a two-year abridged course, with many continuing to the longer course.

At Key Stage 3, almost all National Curriculum subjects, including art, are taught. There is no choice at Key Stage 4 and all work for GCSEs in English Language, English Literature, mathematics, science, religious education and Urdu. A BTEC in ICT has been recently introduced. All school-aged students have lessons in physical education and PCSHE which include opportunities to learn about public institutions and services in England. High emphasis is placed on developing literacy and numeracy skills, with frequent opportunities for students to develop speaking skills through peer discussion and class presentations. This also promotes self-confidence and self-esteem, and is helpful for those who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The curriculum policy and schemes of work are detailed with the needs of all students in mind but the provision to stretch of the most able and develop individual talents is underdeveloped.

In the sixth form, provision is adapted to meet the needs of each cohort and agreed between the providers, Preston College, and school leaders. The range of vocational and academic subjects is relatively small and most vocational subjects such as ICT, childcare, first aid and work skills are at level one or two. However, AS levels are offered including critical thinking, accounting and biology. Students can continue English Literature and religious studies at A2 level.

All school-aged students are expected to attend the two-hour evening homework sessions; these provide excellent opportunities for them to receive additional help and support from teachers. Students enjoy opportunities to make links with the local community through open days, charity events and presenting to local primary school children about their faith. Enrichment opportunities are adequate. These include speakers, such as the local police diversity officer, and representatives from a range of religions, such as Buddhism and Jehovah's witnesses, together with trips to local places of interests, such as Lancaster Cathedral. However, these opportunities are too few, both in the context of education and boarding, to fully enhance students' learning and development through experiences beyond the school environment. Students have adequate opportunities to learn about different careers through PSHE lessons, their own research, in-school work experience and additional provision from Preston College staff. Many tell of their ambition to continue their education beyond school or to become social workers or teachers. Assemblies, celebration of special days such as Democracy Day, access to ICT each evening and routine postings of current news are underpinned by the school's ethos to promote cultural understanding and tolerance. These ensure that students are well prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Inadequate

The welfare health and safety is inadequate because the students' needs are not fully met or for example the environment is not physically safe. At the time of the inspection many national minimum standards for boarding and independent school regulations were met. This includes recent improvements in those for safeguarding.

Students say they feel safe here and 'there is nothing bad about Jamea, it's a life time thing it is amazing and beautiful and looks better than I imagined.' However, this does not reflect what inspectors found during the visit. In March 2011 the fire authority raised concerns regarding the maintenance of fire doors and this continues to be an area of concern because a number of fire doors do not close properly and some are damaged. Inspectors saw a number of fire doors with damage and others that did not fully close. Consequently, the school must ensure it fully complies with fire safety regulations. The school was also asked to provide emergency lighting and this is due for completion in the summer of 2013. Action to fully address these issues has been too slow and may impact upon student's ability to evacuate safely at night or in the winter months. Fire risk assessments are in place, but the resulting actions are not robust. For example, identified risks

such as a fire door not closing are not followed up on the monthly risk assessments and there is no record of the actions taken to address these issues. Risk assessments for other aspects of health and safety are in place but lack detail, such as those for poor quality flooring or the unused and out of bounds areas of the school. The school could not provide evidence that the electrical system has been checked and is safe nor could they demonstrate that work carried out by their employed maintenance staff had the required qualifications, such as for electrical repairs. These are failings of leaders and managers.

All school and boarding staff are now subject to an enhanced criminal records bureau check. Until recently, recruitment procedures were not adequate. The school has acted quickly to address this. The Principal has recently undertaken safer recruitment training, and the recruitment policy and procedures revised. However, while these appear robust they have yet to be tested. All staff, including the head of school and head of boarding have recently completed appropriate child protection training and they say this is already helping them to provide better care for students. The recently updated child protection policy meets requirements.

Students attend school well. Staff who directly care for students provide good round the clock care to support their health and well-being, with sufficient staff always on duty to supervise students. Students say the food is very good and encouraged inspectors to try the pasta. Students say they are aware of the health care arrangements and that these are working well. There are appropriate systems in place for the administration of medication. However, the systems for recording non-prescribed medication are not robust. This is because staff do not record the name of the medication given or the actual dosage; in addition, case notes do not fully reflect when they have visited health care professionals or the outcome of the visit. Consequently, this does not provide a sufficiently clear audit trail of the medication provided nor the actual care and support provided to students when they are unwell.

Students enjoy positive relationships with their Apas and teaching staff which is built upon honesty and trust. Clear policies and procedures promote students' outstanding behaviour and effective systems to ensure that there is little bullying. Students are confident to approach any member of staff should they be worried about anything, and know that the staff will help them resolve and sensitively address any issues. They say, 'We have the best teachers ever, they are always there for us. There are a limited range of activities offered to students outside of school hours. Students are not involved in community based groups and have very limited opportunities to go out into the community to visit places of interest or groups in their free time. Students are highly complementary and enthusiastic about the school and say they have plenty to do. In particular, they said they enjoyed the opportunities to play board games with their friends.

Admissions and attendance registers meet requirements. All admissions are planned and there is a very caring and structured induction process for new students. Communication between care and educational is effective, which helps to provide consistent support. Evidence from questionnaires, Parent View responses and discussions with staff and students all supports the view that students feel safe in the school.

Boarders, including those from overseas, are able to keep in regular contact with their families at any time from the payphones. Boarders have access to several outside agencies, such as the Children's Rights Director and Muslim Childline, should they have any concerns or worries.

Inspectors were aware during this inspection that serious allegations of a child protection nature had been recently investigated by the appropriate authorities. The Police have concluded their investigations and are taking no further action. The local authority and partner agencies have continued to work with the school to improve safeguarding practice. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate allegations of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the allegations were considered alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection to inform inspectors' judgements.

Leadership and management**Inadequate**

The leadership and management of the school are inadequate because leaders and managers have not ensured that the school meets all the regulations for education and national minimum standards for boarding. These failures have a detrimental effect upon students' welfare and safety for example, the condition of the building and the lack of heating in some areas. Nonetheless, all of the required policies and procedures are in place and are regularly reviewed, demonstrating the school's active approach to meeting the regulation and national minimum standards.

Students are extremely positive about the school and their accommodation. They say it is better than any school they have attended, 'it's like living in your own luxury home.' However students do not recognise the safety or maintenance issues within the school. The culture of extremely positive reporting by students is not questioned by leaders and managers.

Many areas of the three buildings that form the school and boarding accommodation and grounds are in poor condition and do not meet the minimum expected standards. The provision of hot water, soap, toilet rolls and hand drying facilities in bathrooms and toilets is erratic. Some bathrooms are in an extremely poor state of repair. Flooring in corridors and stairwells are repaired with tape and are potential tripping hazards. Heating is limited, so that corridors and bathrooms are cold. There is damaged plaster work and peeling paint, for example on the ceilings in boarders' kitchens and in the school building toilets. Some windows appear rotten and let in cold weather. Some areas of the home are not clean, for example, curtains, windows and communal areas. This impacts upon the homeliness of the environment and fails to provide adequate facilities and warmth for students. These issues are not sufficiently reflected in the risk assessments and consequently some risks are not identified or minimised by the administration team and principal. However, they are recorded in the detailed maintenance plan for the school and some refurbishment is underway. Action to ensure a safe environment for students to learn and board has been too slow. Students' bedrooms are more homely; they are personalised and reflect their individual tastes. Appropriate action has been taken to address the boarding concerns and points for improvement noted at the last inspection. For example, the fire doors identified by the inspection are no longer locked or blocked, and there is a new well-equipped ICT suite and an adequately equipped science laboratory.

Education is well managed by dedicated senior leaders. The head of school and head of boarding and the madrassa have written a detailed education and boarding action plan. The plan identifies improvements, including in the quality of teaching and learning resources, the actions needed and timescales, and is routinely monitored and amended. Teaching is rigorously monitored by school and subject leaders. Teachers receive detailed feedback and appropriate training at individual and whole-school level, some of which is provided by staff from Preston College and Bolton Muslim Girls School, a good maintained school. Students' performance in both secular and Islamic studies is carefully tracked and reported to parents and carers each term. Information from students tracking is also used to identify any weaknesses in teaching which are acted on.

The day-to-day running of boarding is well managed by committed and suitably qualified boarding staff, although some staff files do not hold a copy the person's qualifications. Monitoring of boarding provision is satisfactory. However, the shortfalls in the recording of medication and case records have not been identified and some records, such as the bullying log, do not show the full date. A training programme plan is in place which outlines when refresher training, such as administration of medication, is undertaken; this helps maintain staff knowledge and skills so they can meet the needs of students. The school has an appropriate complaints procedure in place and meets all of the regulatory requirements to make available to parents and carers the required information.

Outcomes for boarders	Good
Quality of boarding provision and care	Adequate
Boarders' safety	Inadequate
Leadership and management of the boarding provision	Inadequate

What inspection judgements mean

School and boarding		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education and care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education and care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education and care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	131355
Social care unique reference number	SC039275
Inspection number	422288
DfE registration number	888/6034

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school. The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Independent Muslim School
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	11–20
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Number of part time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	390
Proprietor	Albadr Islamic Trust
Chair	Mr Fazl Wadee
Headteacher	Mr Fazl Wadee (Principal) Mrs Aneesa Soheil (Head of school) and Mrs Zeinab Bhikha (Head of boarding and the madrassa)
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2010
Annual fees (day pupils)	Not applicable
Annual fees (boarders)	£2,500
Telephone number	01524 389898
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