

Rabia Girls' and Boys' School

Portland Road, Luton, LU4 8AX

Inspection dates 13–15 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils	Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching	Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management	Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils are not taught a broad range of subjects in sufficient depth to ensure that they achieve their academic potential.
- Some lessons are not planned carefully enough to ensure that work is challenging for pupils, particularly the more able.
- Too few teachers push pupils to give thoughtful, extended answers or explain to pupils how they can improve their work.
- Girls and boys are not treated equally. They do not have the same educational experiences and opportunities at school.
- Pupils are not kept safe. School leaders, including the governors, do not check that safeguarding policies are put into practice.
- Pupils are not aware of the risks posed by the internet. There are not enough lessons in school to help them learn about staying safe.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development only scrapes the surface of what it means to be a good citizen in Britain today.
- School leaders' action planning to improve the school is weak. It lacks a specific focus on improving pupils' achievements quickly.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils achieve well in Islamic studies and Arabic. They develop a good knowledge of the Quran.
- School leaders have introduced better systems for tracking pupils' progress.
- Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- 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.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 29 lessons; 20 of these were joint observations with a school leader.
- Inspectors took account of 26 responses to the online Parent View survey. Inspectors also considered the responses of 29 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors talked with five groups of pupils as well as with individual pupils during lessons. Inspectors spent six hours looking at work in pupils' books, in addition to the books seen in lessons, and heard a group of pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of the school's leadership team, teachers and the Chair of the Governing Body. They scrutinised a range of documentation including documents relating to pupils' attainment and progress, child protection and safeguarding arrangements, the school's curriculum, the management of teachers' performance and the school's action plan.

Inspection team

Jonathan Palk, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Yaxley

Her Majesty's Inspector

Justina Ilochi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Rabia Girls' and Boys' School is a Muslim day school that is registered to provide full-time education for up to 330 boys and girls aged four and a half to 16 years. There are currently 305 pupils on roll. The school operates on two sites, one for boys and the other for girls. Boys are taught by male staff and girls by female staff.
- The school was set up in 1996 to serve the local community in Luton and to provide Islamic education for young Muslims. It aims to give pupils an opportunity to study and develop their academic and spiritual potential in an Islamic environment.
- Pupils have diverse cultural backgrounds and most are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritages. All pupils speak English as an additional language and many are multi-lingual.
- There are no disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs supported through school action. There are no pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school receives a range of voluntary support from Muslim teachers in local schools and from the Association of Muslim schools.
- The school was last inspected in May 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is good or better by:
 - using information about pupils' progress to set work which is more challenging and more accurately builds on what they already know and can do
 - encouraging pupils to extend their answers to questions so they give them more thought and so teachers can assess how well they are learning
 - making sure that marking helps pupils to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - implementing a rigorous programme for checking that safeguarding policies and procedures are applied
 - ensuring that governors carry out their roles and responsibilities for checking on safeguarding arrangements at the school
 - implementing a management plan to show who is responsible for checking that regulatory standards are met and when this is to happen
 - setting realistic goals for school action plans; identifying precisely when these goals are to be met; recording who is responsible for implementing the action; and describing when and how the action will benefit pupils' achievement.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how all aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.
- Ensure that pupils and staff have training in how to stay safe when using the internet and electronic forms of communication.
- **The school must meet the following independent school standards**
 - Ensure there is a curriculum policy set out in writing which is supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, and that it is implemented effectively (paragraph 2(1)).

- Ensure the curriculum gives all pupils a full-time education with experience in the following areas of learning: linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical, and aesthetic and creative (paragraph 2(2)(a)).
- Make provision for personal, social and health education that reflects the school's aims and ethos (paragraph 2(2)(f)).
- Make provision for appropriate careers guidance for pupils receiving secondary education (paragraph 2(2)(g)).
- Ensure the curriculum provides the opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress (paragraph 2(2)(i)).
- Ensure the curriculum provides adequate preparation of pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of adult life (paragraph 2(2)(j)).
- Ensure that the teaching involves well planned lessons, effective teaching methods, suitable activities and appropriate management of class time (paragraph 3(c)).
- Provide pupils with a broad general knowledge of public institutions and services in England (paragraph 5(a)(iv)).
- Assist pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures, in a way that promotes tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions (paragraph 5(a)(v)).
- Encourage pupils to respect the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (paragraph 5(a)(vi)).
- Make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school having regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7).
- Ensure that the attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 17).
- Ensure that particulars of the curriculum policy of the school as required under part 1, paragraph 2 and particulars of academic performance during the preceding school year, including the results of any public examinations are made available to parents of pupils, parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (paragraph 24(1)(b)).
- Where parents are not satisfied with the response to a written complaint, ensure that the panel appointed by the trust to hear the complaint consists of at least three people who have not been directly involved in the matters detailed in the complaint (paragraph 25(f)).
- Where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, ensure that one person on the panel is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraph 25(g)).

Inspection judgements

Achievement of pupils

Inadequate

- Pupils join the school with a broad range of skills, typical for their age. More able pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not make the progress of which they are capable. In both secular and in Islamic studies, teachers often set all pupils exactly the same work regardless of their different abilities.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils gaining five good grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was comparable to the national average. This included good achievement in religious studies, Islamic studies, Arabic and Urdu.
- There is insufficient time available in Key Stages 3 and 4 for teaching subjects other than those linked to Islamic religious studies, Arabic and Urdu. This means that pupils cannot cover the required content in English and mathematics in the depth necessary to enable them to reach the highest grade.
- The lack of subjects offered to pupils in Key Stage 3 is detrimental to preparing them for a wider range of subjects at GCSE. For example, there are very few lessons in creative subjects. Design and technology, and art lessons, are narrowly focused on drawing with few experiences of working with different materials.
- There is no geography taught to boys and no history taught to girls. There are no facilities for girls to study sciences as single subjects. This disadvantages both genders when making GCSE choices and later on when pupils leave school.
- Opportunities to learn and achieve well in sports and aesthetic subjects such as drama, gymnastics and swimming are similarly restricted because there is often no one available to teach these subjects.
- Vocational experiences are limited to work experience for boys, with nothing provided for girls. This reflects the poor quality of careers and educational advice and guidance, which is largely focused on boys' destinations rather than treating girls and boys equally.
- A scrutiny of writing books showed that few pupils write at length until reaching Years 10 and 11. For some pupils, extra English and mathematics lessons are carried out on Saturdays or after school to help them reach their grades. Even so, only a very few reach the higher grades at GCSE in these subjects.
- Pupils' progress in acquiring competency in English is good in the primary phase. This is due to the close tracking of their reading and writing skills, combined with regular attention to correct oracy and grammar in lessons. In the secondary phase, a lack of focus on developing linguistic skills through good quality discussions adversely affects pupils' confidence in spoken English.
- Tight controls over the use of the internet mean that pupils do not use this tool effectively to develop their research skills or data handling abilities.

Quality of teaching**Inadequate**

- Teachers' subject knowledge in the primary phase is patchy in both schools. In the girls' school, the lack of training for primary teachers results in some inaccurate teaching. Some teachers demonstrate evident skills in teaching letters and sounds (phonics) and grammar, but other staff are uncertain. The lack of good quality guidance for non-specialist teachers, for example, in teaching boys' physical education lessons, leads to low expectations of pupils.
- The quality of feedback to pupils is too variable. Teachers' questioning does not effectively probe pupils' understanding. There are lessons, for example, where teachers ask, 'Is that understood?' without following up with those pupils who are unsure. In the primary phase, weak dialogue between teachers and pupils limits pupils' understanding and application of the skills that they have learned.
- Pupils get mixed messages about the importance of feedback and how to approach their targets. In some instances, the marking in pupils' books is useful in showing how they can improve their work, but teachers do not check that pupils have acted upon this. In some exercise books, particularly those for English, pupils are told the work is 'good' or meeting a certain level without any reference to the work itself, or what success looks like.
- In some lessons, teachers do not make the purpose of the lesson clear. As a result, discussions do not explore or challenge pupils' thinking. In these cases, debate is cut short and the pupils lose confidence which limits their ability to make the progress they should.
- Teachers' subject expertise in Key Stage 3 and 4 is generally better. Teachers' expectations of pupils studying for national examinations at Key Stage 4 are appropriate and focus strongly on the criteria of the course work. This is particularly the case in the teaching of Islamic studies and Arabic across the girls' and boys' schools. In these subjects, teachers are regularly trained and are often scholars at a high level in these subjects.
- Specialist teachers are better than others at setting work at the right level and sustaining this through the lesson. This was the case in a variety of subject lessons in both the secular and Islamic curriculum. The best teaching was typified by skilful lesson structure and work that challenged pupils every step of the way. This maintained excellent engagement in the lesson. In these lessons, pupils made good progress because their subject knowledge was continually developed and the pace was demanding.
- Discussions with pupils about their work and experiences over time reflect some improvement in the quality of teaching. Regular discussions between leaders and teachers about pupils' progress are improving lesson planning and helping raise expectations of individual pupils in lessons. The school's recent evaluation of teaching and learning echoes the finding of the inspectors that there is too much variability in the quality of learning that goes on in lessons.

Behaviour and safety of pupils**Inadequate**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is inadequate. Many staff do not have any training in e-safety and are therefore unable to recognise potential safeguarding breaches, including possible radicalisation, from the internet or social media. Adults do not set a good example when using mobile phones in the building.
- Pupils have very limited awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet. They say they have 'very few' opportunities to use the internet in school. They have received only one

lesson on the risks of social media sites. Consequently, pupils do not acquire a proper understanding of hazards from social media and websites. This compromises their safety.

- Pupils have few opportunities to meet with others of the same age from different cultures and backgrounds. Their knowledge of British values, customs and laws is limited because these are not covered in sufficient depth.
- A close focus on attendance has given rise to improved attendance figures. However, there is no checking on overall patterns of boys' and girls' attendance to ensure that staff are alert to potential safeguarding issues.
- Pupils are calm, focused and confident in lessons. They are diligent and, even where teaching is not as strong, they work hard.
- When given the opportunity, pupils work well with each other and their teachers in school. They consider behaviour is 'always good'. Pupils know the boundaries and behave well in lessons and around the school.

Leadership and management

Inadequate

- School leaders have relied too much on school inspection to steer improvement. They do not have the expertise to evaluate the quality of education they are providing, or to judge the extent to which the school is meeting the independent school standards.
- School leaders' priorities for the school are not rooted in strong evidence. The school lacks a coherent strategy for checking its own effectiveness. Too much is left to one or two people without the benefit of a clear management plan to order priorities for checking how and if the school is improving. Crucially, leaders have not evaluated how teaching time is used to ensure the subjects taught are providing breadth and balance. As a consequence, pupils cannot make the progress of which they are capable across a broad range of educational experiences.
- Since the previous inspection, school leaders have improved the systems for checking on academic performance. These are now secure. The school is collecting reliable pupil attainment data set in the context of national expectations. While results have not improved greatly, the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills are becoming better known.
- Tutors and pupil mentors meet regularly to consider pupils' welfare. The outcomes of these discussions are shared by the staff. Although this results in a more consistent approach to academic and pastoral support than at the time of the previous inspection, it is still not good enough. The curriculum is not broad enough and this limits pupils' opportunities.
- Safeguarding policies are not applied effectively. There is inadequate training for those with senior responsibility in the girls' school. Recruitment procedures are not carried out thoroughly. Some staff do not have written references. Policies are not clear about who should check that safeguarding procedures are being followed. This results in inaccuracies or missing details.
- School leaders and governors have been slow to respond to the awareness training they have received in how to prevent the possible risks associated with extremism to pupils at the school. The governors have failed to ensure that decisive action is taken to ensure that staff and pupils are trained to meet risks associated with social media and internet websites.

- Teachers are keen to get their practice right. They work with leaders to assess and evaluate their teaching. In the boys' school, a number of trainers have been involved in helping teachers to improve their practice, particularly lesson planning, marking and using assessment information to improve learning. However, some of this focuses too narrowly on style rather than the impact on learning.
- School leaders have not ensured that there is sufficient subject guidance in place to support teachers with less experience than others. They have not ensured that girls have the same access as boys to teachers with a good level of subject expertise.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is too piecemeal. There is not enough time in the week for teachers to do full justice to their intentions. There is only a shallow commitment to encouraging pupils to socialise more widely through, for example, trips and visits.
- Despite senior leaders' commitment to educating pupils in the values and morals of contemporary British society, the teaching of personal, social and health education is not well structured. School leaders have provided too little support to accelerate the development of programmes and schemes of work that would enrich pupils' personal, social and health education.
- Governance is weak. Too much responsibility for the education falls to one governor and the headteacher. Governors have no independent means of checking that the school is doing what it says it will do with regard to meeting the standards for independent schools. Policies do not adequately set how the governors are to be involved in checking how they are implemented.
- There is no oversight of the information contained on the school website for parents and prospective parents. The prospectus has not been updated since 2009 and does not contain the required information. The complaints procedure does not make it clear to parents that any complaints will be considered by persons independent of the governing body.
- Equality of opportunity is not promoted adequately. Girls do not have access to the same curriculum opportunities as boys. The school's improvement plan does not show how these barriers to equality are to be eradicated.

What inspection judgements mean

School	
Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Non-association independent school inspection handbook* which is published on the Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140053.

School details

Unique reference number	130331
Inspection number	444468
DfE registration number	821/6001

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.

Type of school	Muslim day school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	305
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Rabia Trust
Chair	Mr Khan
Headteacher	Mirza Akbar
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2011
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,250
Telephone number	01582 493239
Email address	mz@rabiaschool.com

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