

Rabia Girls' and Boys' School

12-16 Portland Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8AX

Inspection date

23 March 2021

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(g)

- At the previous standard inspection in January 2018, teachers did not have the resources or skills necessary to meet pupils' needs. There were concerns about discrimination in pupils' education, based upon gender. Teachers did not have the expertise they needed to teach the primary curriculum. Pupils' opportunities to participate in physical education were limited.
- Leaders failed to ensure that this standard was met at four subsequent inspections.
 - At the progress monitoring inspection in November 2018, teachers were not planning well enough to meet pupils' needs.
 - In May 2019, the quality of pupils' educational experiences was variable across subjects and throughout the school.
 - During the third progress monitoring inspection in September 2019, pupils were still not making the progress they should. Leaders' new assessment framework was not embedded.
 - In September 2020, leaders' work to check and focus on the quality of education and assessment were at the early stages of development. Inspectors were unable to gather sufficient evidence to show that this independent school standard was met.
- During this inspection, inspectors found that weaknesses remain in the implementation of the school's proposed curriculum. Pupils are making weak progress in a range of subjects in both the primary and secondary phases. Basic knowledge and skills in the primary curriculum are not being embedded. As a result, pupils are ill-prepared for their secondary curriculum.
- There is a lack of clear, coherent and well-sequenced planning to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects across the primary and secondary phases. There is little opportunity for pupils to build on what they have worked on previously. This results in

pupils experiencing a disconnected series of lessons that do not develop their skills, knowledge and understanding over time.

- Teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve in subjects are too low. This is evident in the curriculum implementation and in the presentation of pupils' work throughout the school.
- Teachers' use of questions to challenge pupils to think, explain, and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding is not well developed. While teachers have received training to develop and extend their questioning skills, this is at the early stages of being implemented throughout the school.
- Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are still not being used well by all staff. Leaders report that pupils' gaps in learning are being identified and the teaching content reflects this. However, teachers are not using the agreed assessment systems to inform their planning and teaching.
- This previously un-met independent school standard remains un-met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- During the standard inspection in January 2018, leaders had not ensured that the policies for safeguarding, welfare and health and safety were complete. Staff did not follow the agreed procedures. This independent school standard was not met on three consecutive occasions, in November 2018, in May 2019 and in September 2019.
- In the progress monitoring inspection in September 2020, inspectors found that this standard was now met.
- At this progress monitoring inspection:
 - the safeguarding policy remains up to date and available on the website, including the most recent statutory guidance for September 2020
 - new staff who joined the school in November 2020 have completed training to ensure they understand how to keep pupils safe
 - leaders continue to adhere to the government guidance ensuring the COVID-19 (coronavirus) safety arrangements are in place. Social distancing rules are observed, temperature checks continue for anyone entering the school and lateral flow tests are being undertaken by secondary pupils and visitors
 - leaders are in the process of organising a safeguarding audit to be carried out by the local authority.
- Leaders have ensured that these independent school standards continue to be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3)

Paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i), 20(6)(b)(ii), 20(6)(b)(iii), 20(6)(c)

Paragraph 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- At the school's standard inspection in January 2018, these independent school standards were not met. The necessary employment checks on staff and the required records were incomplete.
- In November 2018, the standards were met and continued to be met in the follow up progress monitoring inspections in May and September 2019 and in September 2020.
- The deputy headteacher continues to routinely undertake appropriate pre-employment checks and records these on the single central register of pre-employment checks for new staff.
- Leaders have carried out the statutory checks on those staff who joined the school in November 2020 to ensure they are suitable to work with pupils.
- Other leaders make spot checks on the information held to see that all requirements are in place.
- Leaders ensure that, where relevant, overseas checks are made prior to the appointment of new members of staff. Leaders seek advice from appropriate agencies in order to do this thoroughly.
- Leaders have ensured that these independent school standards continue to be met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- In January 2018, this independent school standard was not met because misleading and sometimes inaccurate information existed on the school's website.
- At the progress monitoring inspection in November 2018, the requirements in the previously un-met paragraphs were met. However, inspectors judged that additional requirements were not met. This was because information about the Secretary of State's decision to impose a restriction order, under section 116 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, was not available to view on the school's website.
- The requirements of paragraphs un-met at the standard inspection and in the first progress monitoring inspection were met in both the May and September 2019 progress monitoring inspections.
- However, at the progress monitoring inspection in September 2019, the previously met requirements in paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(c) were un-met. The school's safeguarding policy was out of date and did not take account of the most recent statutory guidance.
- At the progress monitoring inspection in September 2020, the school's safeguarding policy was up to date and published on the website. A typographical error was corrected on the day of the inspection.
- At this inspection, the school's safeguarding policy remains up to date and available on the website.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard continues to be met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- This independent school standard was un-met at the standard inspection in January 2018 and remained un-met at the four subsequent progress monitoring inspections.
- Over time, leaders and governors have failed to ensure that the requirements for all of the independent school standards are met. These standards were often related to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
- At the progress monitoring inspection in September 2019, inspectors identified that leaders had admitted new pupils to the school in breach of the Secretary of State's restriction notice of 23 January 2019.
- Leaders have ensured that they have not admitted any new pupils since that date.
- In September 2020, although improvements were evident in aspects such as safeguarding, leaders' and governors' strategic understanding and oversight remained weak.
- There remain un-met standards during this inspection. There has been little improvement in the leadership provided by the proprietor since September 2020 to meet the previously un-met independent school standards. Leaders have not ensured that the requirements of all the independent school standards are met consistently and on a continual basis.
- To some extent, leaders' monitoring activities have been slowed by the closing of the school during November 2020 and the spring term of 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the autumn term 2020, leaders' checks on the quality of education lacked focus and were insufficiently rigorous. Leaders' checks rightly identified significant issues in respect of the depth of the taught curriculum but did not indicate the widespread and systemic nature of this weakness. As a result, leaders have made overly generous judgements about the quality of education being provided at the school. This means that teachers do not know clearly enough what it is that they need to do better.
- At the last monitoring inspection, leaders' development of the curriculum had been heavily supported by another local school. This support was essential in the improvements identified in the last monitoring inspection in September 2020. However, leaders report that, owing to the pandemic, they have not been able to engage with these external practitioners. Leaders lack the expertise that this external support was previously providing.
- Governors think that they have a better understanding of the quality of education provided by the school than was the case at the time of the September 2020 monitoring inspection. However, they have an overly generous view of the school's provision, especially in the quality of education. This is because governors rely on what they are told by the headteacher without undertaking any quality assurance themselves.
- At the start of this inspection, the school's chosen form of communication, its website, did not contain the two most recent Ofsted inspection reports. This was rectified by the end of the inspection. However, this reflects the fact that leaders and governors are not routinely ensuring that all independent school standards are met.
- This previously un-met independent school standard remains un-met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	130331
DfE registration number	821/6001
Inspection number	10182816

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	25
Proprietor	The Rabia Education Trust
Chair	Mr Zafar Iqbal Khan
Headteacher	Mrs Hafsa Bilquees
Annual fees (day pupils)	£2,800 (primary and secondary)
Telephone number	01582 493239
Website	www.rabiaschool.uk
Email address	rabia_gs@yahoo.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	16–18 January 2018

Information about this school

- The school was established in 1996 and is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to admit up to 60 boys and girls aged five to 16 years.
- Currently, there are 25 pupils on roll. In the primary provision, in Years 2, 3, 4 and 6, there are eight pupils. There are no pupils in Year 1 and Year 5. In the secondary provision, there are 17 girls.
- The school has a Muslim ethos. Most pupils are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage and speak English as a first language.
- There are no pupils with an education, health and care plan.

- In August 2018, the separate boys' provision, based at 326–340 Dunstable Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8JS, ceased to operate. Leaders now provide education for boys and girls at 12–16 Portland Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8AX.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school does not use supply staff.
- The headteacher took on the substantive role in September 2018.
- The DfE issued a restriction notice to the school in August 2018 halting the admission of new pupils. School leaders appealed this decision but later decided to withdraw the appeal. The DfE enforced the restriction on 23 January 2019.
- The chair of governors is the same as at the November 2018 inspection and at previous monitoring inspections. There are new members appointed to the governing body and governors are looking to make further changes.
- Following the May 2019 inspection, the DfE wrote to the proprietor on 19 June 2019 to ensure compliance with the restriction notice that came into force on 23 January 2019.
- On 21 August 2019, the DfE granted the school's material change request to reduce the number of registered pupils to a maximum of 60.
- During the 12 September 2019 progress monitoring inspection, the inspection team found evidence that the school was still admitting pupils, in breach of the Secretary of State's restriction notice.
- Following the September 2019 progress monitoring inspection, the DfE wrote to the chair of the proprietor body on 27 November 2019 notifying him of the decision to remove the school from the register of independent schools. At the time of the fourth progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor and the trust were appealing this decision.
- The school's inspection history:
 - 11–12 March 2008, a standard inspection when the school was judged to provide a satisfactory quality of education; independent school standards were not met
 - 18–19 May 2011, a standard inspection when the school was judged to provide a satisfactory quality of education, but not all standards were met; the school applied for a material change at this point and increased its pupil numbers
 - 13–15 May 2014, a standard inspection when the overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate; the quality of teaching, behaviour and safety, pupils' achievement and leadership and management were judged to be inadequate; independent standards were not met
 - 26 September 2014, an evaluation of a school action plan, which was judged to require improvement
 - 15 January 2015, a progress monitoring inspection when independent school standards were not met
 - 25 June 2015, an evaluation of an action plan, which was judged as acceptable
 - 13 October 2015, a progress monitoring inspection when independent school standards were not met

- 4 March 2016, an evaluation of an action plan, which was judged as requiring improvement
- 12–14 April 2016, a standard inspection when the overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes required improvement; independent school standards were not met
- 23 June 2016, an evaluation of an action plan, which was judged as acceptable
- 10 January 2017, a progress monitoring inspection when independent school standards were not met
- 27 April 2017, a progress monitoring inspection when independent school standards were not met
- 18 September 2017, an evaluation of an action plan, which was judged as not acceptable
- 16–18 January 2018, a standard inspection when the overall effectiveness was judged as inadequate, safeguarding was judged ineffective and independent school standards were not met
- 6–7 November 2018, an unannounced progress monitoring inspection when independent school standards were not met
- 8 May 2019, an unannounced progress monitoring inspection when independent school standards were not met, which included a material change request to the DfE to reduce the number of pupils currently registered
- 12 September 2019, an unannounced progress monitoring inspection when independent school standards were not met, and the inspection team found evidence that the school was still admitting pupils, despite being prohibited from doing so
- 23 September 2020, an unannounced progress monitoring inspection took place when independent school standards were not met.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at the September 2020 monitoring inspection, as set out in the annex of the deregistration letter issued on 27 November 2019. Inspectors were also asked to check the school's compliance with the restriction notice issued by the Secretary of State, enforced in full on 23 January 2019. The independent school standards inspectors checked were those not met at the fourth progress monitoring inspection in September 2020.
- This is the fifth progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in January 2018.
- Both inspectors adhered to the school's COVID-19 arrangements and completed a COVID-19 lateral flow test prior to arrival at the school site. One inspector completed a second lateral flow test upon arrival at the school site at the school's request.
- The inspection was conducted with 30 minutes' notice, by telephone, on the day of arrival. After two attempts, the lead inspector was able to communicate directly with a member of staff to inform them of the inspection. There was no senior member of staff on site at this time. When the inspectors arrived, the deputy headteacher was at the school.
- The proprietor is the same as at the previous inspection in September 2020. The proprietor was available via telephone during the governors' meeting.
- During the time of this inspection, the headteacher was not available on site owing to COVID-19 but was available to speak to inspectors by telephone.
- Inspectors also met with the deputy headteacher, teaching staff, administration staff, the deputy chair of governors and one other member of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with the school's designated safeguarding and child protection lead.
- Inspectors made visits to primary and secondary lessons and looked, separately, at work in pupils' books. Lesson visits were conducted, observing the COVID-19 safety arrangements in the school. Some lesson visits were completed jointly with senior leaders. A small group of primary and secondary pupils were spoken with informally, appropriately socially distanced.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, updated policies, the school's website, information relating to safeguarding pupils, the single central register of employment checks and admissions and attendance registers.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with two representatives from Luton local authority, the local safeguarding officer and the lead for 'Prevent' duty.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kim Pigram

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Inspectors judged there to be insufficient evidence to make a met or un-met decision at the previous inspection in September 2020. These standards were found to be un-met at this inspection.

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.

These standards were not met at the previous inspection in September 2020 and remain un-met at this inspection.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

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