

# Rabia Girls' and Boys' School

Independent school standard inspection report

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## Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted 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.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## Information about the school

Rabia Girls' and Boys' School is a Muslim day school that is registered to provide full-time education to up to 330 boys and girls aged four and a half to sixteen years. It was set up in 1996 to serve the local community in Luton and the surrounding areas. It operates on two separate sites, one for boys and the other for girls who are taught by male and female staff respectively. There are 259 pupils on roll from the ages of four and a half to seventeen years. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there are six girls of Reception age who attend full time, none of whom has entitlement to free education. 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 pupils identified as having special educational needs and/ or disabilities and none with a statement of special educational needs. The school admitted six post-16 pupils in September 2010 who are 17 years of age and attend part-time. This inspection also looked at the extent to which the school meets the requirements for this material change. It does not report on the trustees' project to open a sixth form centre on a third site from September 2011. The school was last inspected in March 2008.

The school aims to: 'Promote confidence and a strong sense of personal worth; cater for all communities irrespective of ethnicity, culture and disability; ensure that learning is both demanding and enjoyable; help pupils develop moral values, respect and tolerance for other races and religions, and teach them to be honest and truthful.'

## Evaluation of the school

Rabia Girls' and Boys' School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Parents and carers value the good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education that is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in reading, writing and numeracy by the end of the primary school. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and for their welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school complies with all but one of the regulations for independent schools. The material

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<sup>1</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga\\_20020032\\_en\\_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050018\\_en\\_15#sch8](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8)

change is recommended for up to six post-16 pupils on each site and for the range of subjects currently offered to them.

## Quality of education

Despite improvements made since the last inspection and emerging strengths, the quality of the curriculum remains satisfactory. There is a well considered balance between the Islamic curriculum and the general curriculum throughout the school, facilitated by an extended school day. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and primary school, Islamic subjects take up one fifth of the timetable, which enables the school to place an appropriate emphasis on reading, writing and numeracy and these subjects are taught well. In the Reception class, there is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The breadth of the general primary curriculum includes all the National Curriculum subjects except for music; nevertheless, pupils have daily opportunities for singing *nasheeds* (Islamic songs).

The secondary curriculum allocates almost equal time to the Islamic and general programmes. Most National Curriculum subjects are taught and pupils take from seven to nine subjects at GCSE level. The school plans to further broaden the range of subjects examined at GCSE level by introducing history, geography and design and technology as options from September 2011. Arabic is taught from Reception as a foreign language and to support pupils in their understanding of the Qur'an. Pupils learn Urdu from Year 9. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the last inspection with the installation of up-to-date ICT facilities. ICT is used in most subjects throughout the school, which enables pupils to develop a wide range of skills. Pupils have adequate experiences in the aesthetic and creative areas of learning through art in the primary school, ICT, *tajweed* (melodious style of Qur'anic recitation) and specific projects in the secondary school. Specialist teaching in the secondary school enables the more able pupils to learn *tajweed* to high standards. All boys and girls have two weekly lessons of physical education which, enhanced by a few physical activities, make this provision satisfactory.

Islamic education focuses on good manners, character building, beliefs and practice, study of the prophets and Qur'anic recitation throughout the primary school, and so makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. This programme is taught by specialist teachers and expands in Years 7 and 8 to provide a secure foundation for a short course in Islamic theology (*alim/alimah* course) or *hifz* (memorisation of the Qur'an) that start in Year 9 as two separate pathways and are taught in mixed-age groupings according to pupils' abilities.

Since the Islamic theology course runs for five years and the *hifz* course may run for over three years depending on pupils' abilities, some pupils stay on beyond Year 11 to complete the course. In addition, boys can also study English and mathematics at AS and A levels and the school hopes to offer these subjects to girls from September 2011. This current provision is planned satisfactorily and is appropriately resourced. However, any additional subjects offered in the future should be inspected as part of a material change.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) has expanded since the last inspection and reflects the ethos of the school. It has been enriched with the Islam and Citizenship Education (ICE) programme that contextualises Islam in Britain and that is taught from Year 8 through PSHE, the Islamic curriculum and assemblies. Careers guidance has developed to a satisfactory standard since the last inspection. However, not all pupils feel sufficiently well prepared for their future. Curriculum enrichment remains an area for further development and supports pupils' cultural education only satisfactorily. Pupils only have access to a *tajweed* club and booster classes in English and mathematics after school. Boys can join a football club on Friday afternoons.

The curriculum is planned satisfactorily, reviewed annually and supported by resources that are adequate and appropriate. However, subject areas are not coordinated throughout the whole school, which hinders their development. Although the school has not formulated a strategy to develop literacy across the curriculum, pupils' language development benefits from consistent opportunities for extended writing in subjects other than English. This is particularly evident in humanities, from the use of role play and from participation in national reading and writing competitions. Pupils who are at less advanced stages of learning English are supported satisfactorily through individual educational plans and additional support.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory throughout the school. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning, coupled with a programme of professional development, has increased the proportion of good teaching since the last inspection. Teachers generally use resources effectively to aid pupils' learning and science teachers do their best to plan experiments that can safely be carried out in classrooms, pending completion of a science laboratory. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and those who teach post-16 pupils are well qualified for the subjects they teach. Satisfactory teaching does not use assessment sharply enough to inform planning and help pupils make faster progress. Occasionally, the teacher speaks for too long and so pupils become passive learners. Where the teaching is outstanding, it is underpinned by very high expectations of pupils' work, excellent knowledge of the subject, thorough understanding of pupils' prior attainments, aptitudes and needs. Pupils are challenged at a consistently high level to release their potential. There is an appropriate range of assessments to test pupils' learning. Teachers employ useful systems to track pupils' progress and compile informative progress reports twice a year. However, pupils do not always have a clear picture of what to do to improve because marking is not always constructive and teachers do not always set learning targets that are sufficiently consistent. Although the senior leaders use a strategic plan to make improvements, they do not analyse examination and test results sufficiently sharply to inform priorities for academic improvement.

As a consequence of the satisfactory curriculum, teaching and assessment, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in the primary school. They achieve satisfactorily in their English, mathematics and science GCSE examinations. However, the more able do not always

attain appropriately high grades in their examinations, reflecting insufficient challenge for them. In the sixth form, pupils achieve mostly satisfactorily.

## **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

While the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall throughout the school, their cultural development is only satisfactory. The school is successful in creating a well-ordered and warm family atmosphere. Consequently, most pupils enjoy school and feel free from bullying and harassment. Their attendance is low because of holidays taken in term time. Their behaviour is good and they form positive relationships. Pupils develop a strong sense of identity, community and equality, as expressed by a Year 8 girl who said: 'They teach us that no matter how you look or where you come from, we are all the same.' The acquisition of sound basic skills, sound preparation for examinations and college applications, and interviews contribute satisfactorily to pupils' future economic well-being. They also have opportunities to develop enterprise skills in real-life situations and to make public presentations. Boys and girls are inspired to explore future careers through aspiration days when various professionals talk about their work.

Pupils develop a good awareness of what it means to be responsible citizens through a thoughtful combination of citizenship programmes. In Reception, children role play what it means to be a fire fighter or a police officer. Pupils experience democracy through the election of the school council. From Key Stage 3, they learn how they can contribute constructively to civic life in a multifaith society and that to be a good Muslim is to be a good citizen. They contribute to the local community by raising funds for a local hospice that supports children with terminal illnesses, for the baby unit of a local hospital and for local and national charities. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of and respect for people who hold different beliefs from theirs through the resources that support the Islamic curriculum, through world religion days and through the religious education programme which is being rolled out from Year 7. The provision for pupils' cultural development is weaker because it is not sufficiently promoted through the curriculum and educational visits.

## **Welfare, health and safety of pupils**

The school makes satisfactory provision for all pupils' welfare, health and safety and safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Most of the policies and procedures aimed at safeguarding children and minimising risks are implemented consistently. There are a number of members of staff with appropriate first aid training, including paediatric qualifications, on each site. The child protection policy provides clear guidance to staff on how to fulfil their duties and responsibilities should a child protection issue arise. Staff receive the appropriate level of training at the required intervals. However, child protection training has not been refreshed within the required timescale for one of the two designated persons. The school has already taken action to rectify this oversight. The designated persons and headteacher have a rigorous knowledge and understanding of safeguarding matters. Appropriate references are obtained on all staff and their employment history is checked. Pupils

feel very safe and instances of bullying are extremely rare. The school has a satisfactory level of fire safety. However, there are occasional gaps in the record of fire drills. Satisfactory risk assessments of the premises and off-site activities are carried out. Effective monitoring of pupils' attendance and punctuality has reduced absences and lateness. However, strategies used to engage parents in avoiding taking holidays in term time are insufficient and attendance levels remain low.

Pupils develop a good awareness of healthy lifestyles through PSHE, science, Islamic studies and assemblies. Sex, relationships and drugs education is enhanced effectively by visits from health professionals and community workers on both sites and it is adequately resourced with support from health agencies. The school encourages healthy eating and pupils have access to water throughout the day. Pupils have insufficient opportunities for regular physical exercise outside physical education lessons, although boys and girls are encouraged to go swimming after school and visit a local gymnasium.

The school meets its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended, and has planned satisfactorily how to further improve access to the premises and the curriculum.

### **Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors**

Rigorous recruitment procedures ensure that all the required checks are made on staff and the proprietors to ascertain their suitability to work with children prior to confirmation of their employment. These checks are recorded in a single central register in the proper manner.

### **Premises and accommodation at the school**

On both sites, the premises provide teaching accommodation that is fit for purpose and enables effective learning in a safe environment. The outdoor area is under-developed to promote the six areas of learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage in the girls' school. The boys' school compensates for its restricted outdoor space effectively by giving boys daily access to a spacious indoor games room and weekly access of a local multi-use games area. On both sites, the medical room is located close to washing facilities but does not have a sink supplied with hot and cold water as required. There are sufficient washing facilities for pupils and staff, and separate self-contained facilities for sixth formers. The current premises can accommodate up to six sixth formers on each site.

### **Provision of information**

Parents and others are informed through a wide range of accurate and up-to-date information including a prospectus, newsletters, message boards and a developing website. Parents feel well informed of their children's progress each year through two detailed reports and two formal meetings with teachers. Most are very positive about all aspects of the school's work.

## **Manner in which complaints are to be handled**

The school has suitable procedures for handling complaints fairly and promptly.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

The overall effectiveness and leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Satisfactory provision secures satisfactory outcomes for all children. From starting points that are broadly in line with expectations in most areas of learning, children make satisfactory progress overall, including those that are at an earlier stage of learning English than their peers. Most make good progress in their reading and writing skills and in their personal development. Children learn Arabic, which further enhances their language development. Sharing Islamic studies lessons with Year 1 pupils promotes their social skills effectively. Children enjoy role playing, pretending to be fire fighters or police officers. They feel safe and well cared for because the adults safeguard their welfare satisfactorily. Children behave well and are taught the basics of road safety. They develop good daily hygiene routines and are encouraged to eat healthily.

The planning of the curriculum ensures a satisfactory balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. However, as the outdoor area is under-developed, the planning of outdoor activities does not consistently reflect the six areas of learning. Useful systems enable staff to assess the progress of each child towards the expected goals and to share this information with parents. Teaching is satisfactory because adults do not always sufficiently engage children in conversation to extend their skills and understanding. Staff are adequately qualified for this age group. However, they have not had any specific training in Early Years Foundation Stage practice, which means that the assessments are not totally reliable. Self-review is sound and demonstrates satisfactory capacity for improvement.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations'), with the exception of those listed below.<sup>3</sup>

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises of and accommodation at schools (standards in part 5) and must:

- ensure that there are appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill on each site by fitting a sink in each medical room (paragraph 23(k)).

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<sup>3</sup> [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made)



## **What the school could do to improve further**

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Coordinate the work done in subject areas throughout the school so as to share best practice and analyse examination and test results more sharply to inform priorities for academic improvement.
- Help pupils gain a clearer understanding of what to do to improve by involving them more closely in the assessment of their learning, through consistently constructive marking and the setting of challenging learning targets.
- Implement a broader range of strategies to improve attendance more robustly.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, develop good practice in planning and assessment through professional development.

## Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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### The quality of education

Overall quality of education			✓	
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils			✓	
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs			✓	
How well pupils make progress in their learning			✓	

### Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

### Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			✓	
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### The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage			✓	

## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent
<b>Type of school</b>	Muslim day school
<b>Date school opened</b>	1996
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	Four and a half to seventeen years
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed (taught on separate sites)
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 118      Girls: 135      Total: 253
<b>Number on roll (part-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 3      Girls: 3      Total: 6
<b>Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs</b>	Boys: 0      Girls: 0      Total: 0
<b>Number of pupils who are looked after</b>	Boys: 0      Girls: 0      Total: 0
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£1,250
<b>Address of school</b>	326-340 Dunstable Road, Luton LU4 8JS (boys) 12-16 Portland Road, Luton LU4 8AX (girls)
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 481730 (boys) 01582 493239 (girls)
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@rabiaschool.co.uk">admin@rabiaschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mirza Akbar
<b>Proprietor</b>	Rabia Education Trust