

Mehria School

23 Westbourne Road, Luton LU4 8JD

Inspection dates

26–28 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

Effectiveness of leadership and management
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
Personal development, behaviour and welfare
Outcomes for pupils
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Inadequate
Good
Inadequate
Good
Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders, managers and governors have failed to implement basic policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and well-being.
- Pupils are potentially at risk because arrangements for safeguarding do not meet statutory requirements.
- School improvement planning and systems to monitor, evaluate and review the work of the school are not thorough or well organised.
- Members of the governing body do not hold leaders sufficiently to account. They are over-reliant on what they are told by the headteacher.
- Leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that the school meets all the independent school standards.
- Although pupils achieve well, their attitudes to learning are not exemplary: their presentation of written work is often too untidy, and there is occasionally low-level disruptive behaviour in lessons in the younger years.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are proud of their school. They are very polite and show respect for each other.
- The headteacher and his staff have a clear vision for the school which is understood by pupils, staff and parents.
- Pupils achieve well in the school because of the good-quality teaching they receive. Relationships between pupils and teachers are typically good.
- Islamic studies and Arabic are taught particularly well at this school.
- Pupils' attendance is high.
- The school offers a broad range of subjects and many extra-curricular clubs which pupils enjoy.
- The school promotes fundamental British values well. Pupils have a good understanding of a range of different faiths and cultures and are well prepared for living in modern democratic Britain. They show maturity in their acceptance of people from all walks of life.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school must take action to meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (the 'independent school standards') and associated requirements. The details are listed in the full report.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership by:
 - ensuring that the school establishes accurate and robust quality assurance systems to check its compliance against the most up-to-date independent school standards so that it meets every one
 - producing a school improvement plan which is pertinent to this school, with measurable success criteria which can be checked regularly during the school year
 - making sure that all staff are clear about their roles, particularly with regard to the safeguarding of children
 - making sure that information provided to teachers following lesson observations makes direct reference to the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress.
- Improve governance by:
 - making sure that members of the governing body are fully conversant with the independent school standards
 - ensuring that governors understand their role in monitoring the work of the school and the implementation of its policies, particularly with regard to promoting pupils' welfare and the safeguarding of children
 - ensuring that members of the governing body hold the senior leaders to account for the school's performance by asking appropriate and challenging questions.
- Ensure pupils' safety by:
 - producing a thorough risk assessment which takes full account of the business which operates within the school's grounds
 - making sure that all staff have up-to-date training in safeguarding and are aware of their role in keeping children safe
 - ensuring that the school's signage for emergency evacuation leads to an exit that is operational and that the fire door is not locked.
- Make teaching outstanding by:
 - ensuring all teachers consider carefully how the tasks they set pupils are linked to accelerating their progress
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of how pupils' work should be presented in their books
 - eliminating occasional low-level disruptive behaviour.
- The school must meet the following independent school standards.
 - Ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and that such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b))
 - Ensure that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy (paragraph 11)
 - Ensure that compliance meets the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12)
 - Ensure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15)
 - Ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a) and 16(b))
 - Ensure that no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either section and the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each person: the person's identity, the person's medical fitness, the person's right to work in the United Kingdom and, where appropriate, the person's qualifications. The proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as

practicable after a person's appointment; in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person's suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraphs 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))

- Ensure the proprietor is not barred from any regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that individual is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act; and does not carry out work, or intend to carry out work in contravention of a prohibition order, or an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction; and the Secretary of State makes the following checks relating to the individual before the school is entered in the register, or in the case of a registered school, before or as soon as practicable after the individual takes over as proprietor; where relevant to the individual, an enhanced criminal record check, countersigned by the Secretary of State where an application for such a check is made under section 113B(1) of the 1997 Act; checks confirming the individual's identity and their right to work in the United Kingdom; and in the case of an individual for whom, by reason of that individual living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish the individual's suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Secretary of State considers appropriate; and where an enhanced criminal record check is made, the Secretary of State obtains an enhanced criminal record certificate relating to the individual (paragraphs 20(3), 20(3)(a)(i), 20(3)(a)(ii), 20(3)(b), 20(3)(b)(i), 20(3)(b)(ii) and 20(3)(b)(iii))
- Ensure that a register is kept which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question and the register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form and the information referred to in this sub-paragraph is in relation to each member of staff ('S') appointed on or after 1 May 2007, whether: S's identity was checked; a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act; a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction; checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications; an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S; checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d); a check of S's right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e), including the date on which each such check was completed or the certificate obtained; and in relation to each member of staff ('S') whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date of which such check was completed. The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is in relation to each member of staff in post on 1 August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1 May 2007, whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (3) was made and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained. The information referred to in sub-paragraph (6) is, in relation to each member ('MB') of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1 May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made and the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained. The information referred to in sub-paragraph (7) is, in relation to each member of a body of persons named as proprietor in post on 1 August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1 May 2007, whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (6) was made; and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained (paragraphs 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(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a) and 21(7)(b))
- Ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils including accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraphs 24(1), 24(1)(b))
- Ensure that the school premises and the 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 (paragraph 25)

- Ensure that suitable drinking water facilities are provided and cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking are clearly marked as such (paragraphs 28(1)(a) and 28(1)(c))
- Ensure that the information provided in sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils, and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate to include, where the proprietor is an individual, the proprietor's full name, address for correspondence during both term-time and holidays and a telephone number or numbers on which the proprietor may be contacted, or, where the proprietor is a body of persons, the address and telephone number of its registered or principal office; where there is a governing body, the name and address for correspondence of its Chair; and particulars of educational and welfare provision for pupils with EHC plans and pupils for whom English is an additional language, and particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 13 (paragraphs 32(1), 32(1)(g), 32(2)(b)(i), 32(2)(b)(ii), 32(2)(c), 32(3)(b) and 32(3)(d))
- Ensure that where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school (paragraphs 33, 33(g))
- Ensure that the proprietor and those persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently, fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently and actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b) and 34(1)(c))

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate

- The school does not meet all the independent school standards. Although the school's leaders say they are aware of the standards and recent amendments to these, inspection evidence does not support this. A number of key standards have not been met. Many of these relate to the welfare and safeguarding of children in the school.
- Safeguarding is poorly managed. Risk assessments are not thorough enough to adequately ensure the safety of children. The member of staff designated with safeguarding responsibilities is not sufficiently aware of their role. School leaders could not readily provide evidence to demonstrate that all staff's training in safeguarding was up to date. Leaders do not have a good understanding of child protection procedures or how records should be kept. The school has not published its safeguarding policy on its website, and the existing safeguarding policy refers staff to out-of-date guidance.
- The school has not taken adequate measures to protect children from the risks of having a business operating within the school grounds. Children told inspectors that they talk to adults who work in these business premises, encounter visitors to the premises and that the school gates are not always locked when the business is operating.
- School improvement planning is weak. Although the school has identified a list of actions it plans to take, it is not sufficiently clear how the impact of these actions will be measured and how often. Some targets are far too vague.
- Although the school tests its fire alarm system more regularly than required, the emergency evacuation signage leads occupants of the school to a fire door which is bolted.
- Essential policies and paperwork are not completed efficiently. For example:
 - the school does not maintain an admissions register, which is a requirement
 - the school's attendance registers have not been maintained appropriately
 - the school's policy for making a complaint against the school does not ensure a fully independent approach to any panel hearing that may be necessary
 - the school's information provided to parents or prospective parents does not contain all of the required information.
- Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the complaints policy is fit for purpose. A parental complaint made directly to the police and the Department for Education was investigated by the local authority's designated officer and the police, but was subsequently closed due to a lack of evidence to support the allegation.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and this is known by staff, pupils, governors and parents. Despite weaknesses in long-term strategic planning, leaders have secured good-quality teaching and outcomes over time. Parents receive regular information on their child's progress throughout the year.
- Leaders observe teaching regularly and provide written feedback to teachers on the quality of their teaching. However, the quality of guidance is too variable and does not always make specific enough reference to the impact that teaching is having on pupils' progress.
- The range of subjects taught at the school is suitably broad and balanced. The content is well matched to pupils' needs. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Its ethos provides pupils with opportunities to reflect on their actions and the actions of others, and to learn about doing the right thing in difficult situations.
- Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures. They have contact with representatives from the local and wider community, including the police and representatives of other faiths. They take part in ecological projects and have raised monies for local and international charities, including for those suffering from breast cancer. They are well prepared for being responsible members of modern British society.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is ineffective because governors have not held the leaders of the school sufficiently to account. They are over-reliant on what the senior leaders tell them without checking its validity for themselves.
 - The governing body has not ensured that robust systems are in place to keep children safe. Not all members of the governing body feature in the school's single central register.

- Minutes of meetings of the governing body are too operational in nature and show insufficient strategic direction.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective. The school's single central register of recruitment checks of staff is not compliant with statutory requirements. Some people employed by the school and two members of the governing body are missing from the register and the register does not indicate that all the necessary checks have been made. The school's leaders could not provide evidence to demonstrate that all the necessary checks had been completed before inspectors left the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Good teaching in this school helps pupils to learn effectively and make good progress. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and plan their lessons effectively. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils engage well in their learning. Teachers encourage pupils to deepen their understanding of what they are being taught by asking them to work out how they have arrived at an answer, rather than simply accepting the answer on its own.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils in what they can achieve and how well they should conduct themselves. They know what each pupil is capable of achieving. The presentation of pupils' work is, however, sometimes untidy. Closer scrutiny of pupils' books shows that, even when presenting their work poorly, they understand well what they are being taught.
- Teachers often make reference in their lessons to pupils' prior learning. For example, in a Year 5/6 Islamic studies lesson, the teacher asked pupils to recall what they had learnt about how to perform Wudu (a form of ablution), and to link this to what they were being taught. This helped pupils to put what they were being taught into context. The teacher also promoted equal opportunities by ensuring that girls who were not joining in with the singing activity were provided with an opportunity to sing separately from the boys.
- Marking of pupils' work is conducted regularly and indicates how pupils can improve their work in order to move up to the next level of attainment.
- Teaching assistants are used well in Years 1 to 4 to help pupils learn for themselves.
- Teachers plan their lessons well to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to read aloud which develops their confidence and broadens their range of vocabulary. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy reading and this was evident from listening to them read and observing their learning in lessons.
- Where teaching is weaker, teachers are too focused on ensuring that pupils complete all of the tasks set, rather than considering how the tasks are improving their understanding of what they are being taught.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate. This is because the school's proprietors and leaders have not established robust procedures to assure the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Although pupils feel safe in school, leaders have not taken adequate action to ensure that pupils are safe at all times. Teachers do not always implement the safeguarding policy consistently. For example, the safeguarding policy states that 'staff will not carry personal mobile telephones while working'. Inspectors saw a number of teachers in possession of mobile telephones while at work.
- The school ensures that pupils have a reasonable understanding of different forms of bullying and that they learn about the risks associated with social networking sites.
- The school's medical facility, although close to a toilet, does not include a suitable 'washing facility', as specified by the independent school standards, to deal hygienically with bodily fluids. Drinking water available to pupils is not clearly labelled.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent. They attend school regularly, and punctuality to school and lessons is good.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move around the school site sensibly and are typically respectful towards their teachers, each other and visitors to the school.
- Attitudes towards learning are usually positive, and pupils respond well to the good-quality teaching they experience. Occasionally, a small amount of low-level disruptive behaviour can occur, typically in the younger classes, when some pupils talk to each other when they should be listening to their teacher.
- Pupils are encouraged to speak politely to each other and the use of any form of slang or derogatory language is strongly discouraged.
- No pupils have been excluded from the school since it opened in 2006. The school implements its behaviour policy well and uses an appropriate range of sanctions and rewards when necessary.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils enter the school with skills and abilities broadly typical of their age. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, they reach above-average levels for their age, indicating that pupils make good progress at the school.
- The school's assessment information shows that pupils achieve well at Key Stage 1. In 2015, all pupils reached the expected level in all subjects and a much larger-than-average proportion reached the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Although not required to, the school chooses to carry out the Key Stage 2 national tests, which are statutory in maintained schools. In 2015, the results of these tests were notably high, showing much higher-than-average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' exercise books show that all pupils make at least expected progress and some make good progress. Pupils' work is generally at a level typical of pupils of a similar age with some working at a higher level. However, pupils' work is frequently untidy and appears to lack care; poor presentation makes pupils' work appear to be of a poorer quality at first glance than when looked at more closely.
- The school has recently adopted a new method of assessment and this system is in its infancy. The school's current assessment information does not reflect the same very high level of attainment seen at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2015. Almost all pupils have been assessed to be working at the 'expected' level with one or two 'exceeding' it. This means that the most-able pupils in the school are not identified and monitored carefully enough.
- The new system for collecting information about pupils' progress does not relate easily to the previous one. While moving from one system to the next, the school's leaders have not looked closely at whether pupils have made progress and whether that progress is good enough. They have not analysed this information fully enough to have a direct impact on outcomes for pupils.

School details

Unique reference number	134289
Inspection number	10010086
DfE registration number	821/6010

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	Day faith primary school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jamia Islamia Ghousia Trust
Chair	Qazi Abdul Aziz
Headteacher	Zia UI Mustafa Qazi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,850
Telephone number	01582 484617
Website	www.mehriaschool.org
Email address	info@mehriaschool.org
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2012

Information about this school

- Mehria School is an independent faith day school for boys and girls that admits pupils of any or no faith. It opened in 2006 and is registered to take a maximum of 90 pupils.
- The school is located in a residential neighbourhood of Luton within a Mosque complex. A commercial business operates within the school's grounds.
- Pupils are taught in mixed classes in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6, and are taught separately in Years 3 and 4.
- No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- There are no pupils who have special educational needs or disability and no disadvantaged pupils currently attending the school.
- The school aims to 'produce hardworking, well-mannered and well informed young Muslims who are able, through their knowledge, skills and good character to benefit from the opportunities that Allah provides and to go on to be a positive force in society'.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted with one day's notice. The school was last inspected in December 2012, when it was judged to be outstanding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across all year groups, across a wide range of subjects. The headteacher observed pupils' learning with one inspector.
- Meetings were held with the school's senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a group of pupils from Key Stage 2.
- Inspectors scrutinised school improvement documents, policies, information on pupils' achievement, pupils' work, records of the quality of teaching and minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also analysed the school's risk assessments and the single central record of recruitment checks of staff.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to undertake any analysis of parental views. No members of staff responded to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors took into account one letter received from a parent.
- The Department for Education asked inspectors to pay particular attention to the welfare, health and safety of pupils as the result of a parental complaint.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Wendy Varney	Her Majesty's Inspector

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