

# Mehria School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Michèle Messaoudi

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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.

## **Information about the school**

Mehria School is an independent, co-educational Muslim day school that admits pupils of any faith or no faith aged from five to 11 years. It opened in 2006 and is registered to take a maximum of 60 pupils. There are 43 pupils on roll, all of whom are either bilingual or at advanced stages of learning English as an additional language. None has a statement of special educational needs. Currently, pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The school is located in a residential part of Luton within a mosque complex. It was last inspected in October 2009.

The school aims to 'produce hard-working well-mannered and well-informed young Muslims who are able, through their knowledge, skills and good character to benefit fully from the opportunities that Allah provides and to go on to be a positive force for good in society.'

## **Evaluation of the school**

Mehria School has made good progress since the last inspection; it provides an outstanding quality of education and meets its aims. Pupils make outstanding progress in their learning owing to outstanding teaching relentlessly focused on raising their achievement year on year. Outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, coupled with a good curriculum, enables pupils to make outstanding progress in their personal development. Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning are reflected in their very active participation in class and in clubs, their good attendance and their outstanding behaviour. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and the school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has rectified shortcomings reported in the last inspection and now meets all of the regulations for independent schools.

## **Quality of education**

The main strength of the good curriculum is that it is successfully balanced between National Curriculum and Islamic subjects and promotes pupils' basic skills and personal development extremely well. The programme of Islamic and Qur'anic studies is central to pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. For example, in the course of learning about the attributes of Allah, Year 5 and 6 pupils explored the concept of 'beginninglessness,' and weekly assemblies invite pupils to reflect on themes such as 'Allah loves peacemakers' and 'caring for neighbours.' All pupils have daily lessons of Arabic, which support their recitation and memorisation of Qur'anic verses well. There is a strong emphasis on English and mathematics. Literacy is promoted well in all subjects, which supports the communication skills of pupils who

are bilingual or at advanced stages of learning English well. Reading and writing skills are taught systematically in Key Stage 1 and pupils throughout the school read challenging texts. The provision for English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) is strong. Pupils enjoy increasing opportunities for hands-on experiences that make links between several subjects. For example, they have made volcanoes out of papier mâché and made dens for various animals in Maulden Woods. The school has plans in hand to further develop a creative approach to the curriculum. Pupils study all National Curriculum subjects except for music, but they have the opportunity to join the nashid (Islamic songs) club and experience singing and playing instruments when participating in school productions. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) reflects the Islamic ethos of the school and makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. It includes the Islam and Citizenship Education programme that contextualises Islam in Britain. The provision for physical education (PE) is satisfactory. Pupils have two PE lessons a week during which they develop core physical skills and play a wide range of games. The school recognises that PE is an area for further development and plans to introduce swimming and build a football team.

The planning of the curriculum is sufficiently detailed to support the teaching well. A two-year rolling programme ensures that pupils in mixed-age classes progress in their learning without unnecessary repetition. Pupils who have minor learning difficulties are supported effectively through individual educational plans and an extraordinary amount of attention. Consequently, they are able to make at least good progress over time. There are adequate resources to teach the curriculum. However, ICT is not used consistently to support pupils' learning in all subjects. The enrichment programme has improved since the last inspection. Educational visits enhance the curriculum well. Pupils can extend their creative and literacy skills by joining creative, nashid, scrabble or public speaking clubs.

While the quality of teaching and assessment is outstanding overall, assessment is good. The staff improve their teaching skills through a programme of continuous professional development. However, the school recognises that much could be gained by forging links with local schools for the purpose of further developing the curricular provision and staff expertise, and producing a written plan to facilitate the monitoring of further improvements. Teachers and classroom assistants work as a cohesive team driven by the same ambition to secure the best outcomes for pupils. They establish excellent working relationships that enable pupils to learn in a relaxed but purposeful environment. The teaching is characteristically underpinned by very high expectations of what pupils can achieve, reflected in the planning of challenging tasks and well-established working routines that maximise use of time. The staff skilfully use probing questions that make pupils apply consistent effort, promote independent thinking and a high level of intellectual development. The staff check frequently on individual pupils' learning and give targeted support as required. Resources are often used effectively and imaginatively to support and challenge pupils' learning. However, occasionally, the unnecessary use of worksheets restricts pupils' independence.

Assessment procedures have significantly improved since the last inspection. Individual pupils' attainment is assessed regularly against National Curriculum targets and recorded in a way that makes it easy to track their progress from term to term in English, mathematics and science. The school is extending the process to other subjects this academic year. Teacher assessments are moderated externally. However, teachers do not have the opportunity to engage in the moderation of their assessments with colleagues from another school, which would extend their expertise. Teachers work extremely hard to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress in the short and longer terms. Consequently, pupils achieve very highly in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, and they achieve highly in science. Pupils gain a good understanding of how they can improve their work through constructive verbal feedback, marking comments, learning targets and informative academic reports. However, the marking of English is not consistently detailed enough to help pupils to produce the best quality writing of which they are capable, and learning targets are not set in all subjects.

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

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is underpinned by an Islamic ethos clearly centred on giving pupils a strong Islamic identity and preparing them to function as productive and responsible citizens in multicultural Britain. Their spiritual and moral development is reflected in their good attendance and their outstanding behaviour. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning through their high levels of participation in class and in clubs, and their consistent application to work. They have daily opportunities for reflection, often on complex concepts that deepen their understanding of Islamic beliefs and develop their analytical skills extremely well. They are thoughtful and express their views confidently. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and enjoy exceptionally positive relationships with staff and peers based on mutual respect. They fully understand their individual responsibility in maintaining a peaceful and orderly school community and the vast majority demonstrate consistent self-discipline. Pupils are very polite, considerate and welcoming.

Pupils gain an excellent awareness of English democracy through the citizenship programme and the process of electing a pupil council and exercising their responsibilities as representatives or 'constituents.' Collectively, they contribute to improving school life, for example by initiating archery activities, the formation of a football team and the purchase of board games for use at lunch times. Pupils can aspire to be Head Boy and Head Girl and their deputies, and fulfil specific responsibilities such as setting up lunchtime games activities and organising Eid parties. Pupils contribute to the production of the termly school magazine, which enables them to use their ICT and literacy skills. Pupils have concrete experiences of applying Islamic principles of responsibility towards the natural environment when participating in a programme centred on ecology activities within an inter-faith framework. During such activities, they also learn to appreciate that other faith groups uphold similar values to theirs. Pupils actively help to raise funds for various

national and international charities, which fosters their sense of responsibility towards the wider community.

Pupils' cultural and multicultural development is enhanced well through art, educational visits and other enrichment activities. Pupils have had the opportunity to work together on large-scale art work used as sets for school performances, and to apply the principles of cubism to interpretations of a famous mosque. They have the opportunity to demonstrate their competence in Qur'anic recitation, as well as their drama, singing and music skills when participating in whole school presentations. They have attended a nashid concert given by a famous nashid artist. Pupils learn about the religious beliefs of others by comparison with Islam and also through first hand experiences that develop their understanding of and respect for other points of view. For example, they have learnt about Christianity and explained the main features of Islam through a question and answer session with a group of Christian Scouts who visited the school.

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

The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The staff create a caring ethos in which all pupils feel included and none is isolated. All the essential policies and procedures aimed at minimising risks are up-to-date and implemented consistently. However, the relevant documentation is not always organised effectively, which does not facilitate the monitoring of this aspect of the school's work. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The staff are supported well by a detailed child protection policy and appropriate training in child protection at the required intervals. All the required checks are made on staff. A well-structured reward and sanction system helps to promote the highest standards of behaviour in pupils. There has been no need for serious sanctions to date. Pupils report that bullying is very rare and they feel free from harassment. Supervision is vigilant and few accidents occur. Pupils feel safe and gain a good awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe through PHSCE and visits from public services officers. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through the curriculum and the healthy eating policy. They understand what constitutes a well-balanced nutritious meal and they are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. They have planned opportunities to exercise regularly and vigorously.

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

Robust recruitment procedures ensure that all the requested checks are carried out on staff and proprietors. These checks are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

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

The premises provide teaching accommodation that enables safe and effective learning. The outdoor area is under-developed for recreational purposes and pupils have access to a local park in good weather.

## **Provision of information**

Parents and carers receive accurate and up-to-date information as required, mainly through an information pack. Parents and carers appreciate the school's open door policy.

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

The complaints procedures meet all requirements to handle complaints fairly and promptly.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

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

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

- Further develop the use of ICT across the curriculum to support pupils' learning.
- Refine the marking of English and set learning targets in all subjects.
- Forge links with local schools for the purpose of further developing the curricular provision and staff expertise.
- Use a written strategic plan to facilitate the monitoring of further improvements.

## 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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## School details

<b>School status</b>	Independent		
<b>Type of school</b>	Day Muslim primary school		
<b>Date school opened</b>	September 2006		
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5-11 years		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed		
<b>Number on roll (full-time pupils)</b>	Boys: 20	Girls: 23	Total: 43
<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>	£1,200		
<b>Address of school</b>	23 Westbourne Road Luton Bedfordshire LU4 8JD		
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 484617 (07930 672266)		
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:zmqazi@hotmail.com">zmqazi@hotmail.com</a>		
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zia UI Mustafa Qazi		
<b>Proprietor</b>	Jamia Islamia Ghousia trust		

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



7 December 2012

Dear Pupils  
*Assalamu alaykum*

### **Inspection of Mehria School, Bedfordshire, LU4 8JD**

Thank you for making me feel welcome when I visited your school recently. I was delighted to see how happy you are at school, how much you enjoy learning and apply yourselves. I was impressed by your outstanding behaviour, your excellent manners and your self-confidence.

This inspection found that your school provides you with an outstanding quality of education and meets all government requirements. You learn a good balance of National Curriculum and Islamic subjects. Your teachers and classroom assistants work extremely hard and their outstanding teaching enables you to make outstanding progress. You also make outstanding progress in your personal development. You have very interesting experiences that make you aware of the need to respect the environment and others, whatever their beliefs. You say that you feel safe and free from bullying, and indeed the staff look after you well.

I have made some recommendations to make your school even better. I have asked the school to:

- ensure that ICT is used more often in all subjects to support your learning
- help you to understand more clearly how you can progress even better in all subjects
- make links with other schools for the purpose of further developing the curriculum and staff expertise.

You can play their part in helping the school to achieve this by keeping up the best standards of behaviour and the highest levels of attendance, and by working as hard as I saw during the inspection. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michèle Messaoudi  
Lead inspector