

Rabia Girls' and Boys' School

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

Inspection dates

23 September 2020

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 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i)

- Prior to this progress monitoring inspection, this standard was unmet at four consecutive inspections.
 - At the standard inspection in January 2018, the curriculum was too narrow. Some schemes of work were missing, and some subjects were not taught.
 - At the progress monitoring inspection in November 2018, leaders had started to extend the curriculum on offer to pupils, but the changes were at an early stage of implementation.
 - At the progress monitoring inspection in May 2019, the quality of curriculum for aesthetic and creative subjects was too variable.
 - During the progress monitoring inspection in September 2019, schemes of work, including those for aesthetic and creative learning, were still being adapted to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.
- Since the last progress monitoring inspection, leaders have taken appropriate action to address this independent school standard, especially in the period prior to March 2020 before the school closed during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions. The curriculum policy, developed with the support of external consultants, is now detailed, with close links to schemes of work in both the primary and secondary phases. The policy is shared with parents on the school's website.
- The school's curriculum offer is clearly set out, including for aesthetic and creative learning. There are progression plans in place, based on national curriculum statements and GCSE specifications. The plans give an overview of the leaders' curriculum intent and establish a useful framework for teachers to work to in planning for pupils' learning.
- The school's planning and assessment model is closely matched to the curriculum policy and schemes of work. Teachers' subject files show that the model is applied more consistently now across subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

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

- Prior to this progress monitoring inspection, leaders had failed to ensure that this standard was met at four consecutive inspections:
 - This independent school standard was not met at the January 2018 standard inspection. Teachers did not have the resources or skills necessary to meet pupils' needs. Discrimination in pupils' education, based on gender, was also a contributory factor in this unmet standard. From Year 3 onwards, girls and boys were not taught together. Pupils' breaks, lunchtimes and after-school activities were segregated. The boys were disadvantaged because they received a lower standard of education than the girls. Teachers did not have the expertise they needed to teach the primary curriculum. Pupils did not have enough opportunities to join in physical education.
 - In the progress monitoring inspection in November 2018, activities were not planned well enough to meet pupils' needs.
 - The standard remained unmet in the May 2019 progress monitoring inspection. While teaching quality overall was improving, especially in English, mathematics and science, pupils' experience was of variable quality across subjects and year groups.
 - In September 2019, despite some improvements, this standard remained unmet. The quality of primary pupils' extended writing across the curriculum was not good enough and pupils were still not making the progress they should. Secondary-aged pupils had less access to age-appropriate books than primary pupils. The new assessment framework, developed with the support of external consultants, was not embedded.
- Since 23 March 2020 and until 7 September 2020, the school was closed to all pupils because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the summer holiday. At the time of this progress monitoring inspection, pupils had been at school for two weeks.
- There are signs in this early reopening period that leaders are using the new curriculum policies and processes to begin to improve the quality of teaching.
 - Teachers are adhering to the curriculum schemes put in place and are undertaking the appropriate training.
 - Leaders have reintroduced the programme of lesson visits aimed at sharing good practice between staff.
 - Staff are beginning to work together across subjects to make connections in pupils' learning aiming to help improve pupils' progress.
 - Leaders have been reviewing the gaps in pupils' learning caused by the long period away from on-site education throughout the spring and summer of 2020.
- However, this work is at an early stage since the school reopened.
 - Some staff have not yet completed or had time to implement their training.
 - Pupils have not had time to complete enough work to be able to exhibit the impact of the revised curriculum on their learning, including for those pupils who need more support.
 - Owing to the limitations of COVID-19 restrictions, inspectors were unable to complete their usual range of inspection activities, such as extended conversations with pupils about their work.

- The COVID-19 restrictions, coupled with the school closure, meant that there was not enough evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of teachers’ new planning and assessment practice over time. Similarly, there was insufficient evidence to show whether paragraph 3(g), that was previously met, remains met.
 - Much of the improved curriculum evidence in paragraph 2 above has been created in liaison with external partners. Owing to the closure of the school, leaders were unable to restart the implementation of this new curriculum until two weeks ago. There is no current evidence to prove how well leaders can sustain the implementation of curriculum changes and improvements to teaching, without the intervention of external support, given the long-standing failures in this paragraph.
- As a result, inspectors were not able to gather sufficient evidence to show that this independent school standard is met at the current time.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- Prior to this progress monitoring inspection, this independent school standard was not met on four consecutive occasions:
- In January 2018, the school’s policies for pupils’ safeguarding, welfare and health and safety were incomplete. Staff did not follow the agreed procedures.
 - The standard remained unmet during the progress monitoring inspection in November 2018. The school’s safeguarding arrangements were not effective. The local authority was concerned about the sufficiency of staff training. Leaders did not take part in the authority’s designated safeguarding group.
 - The standard remained unmet in the progress monitoring inspection in May 2019. Links with the local authority’s safeguarding team and with other external agencies offering support for vulnerable pupils were weak.
 - During the progress monitoring inspection in September 2019, this standard was still not met. Leaders were unaware of the changes in the Department for Education’s (DfE) statutory guidance, ‘Keeping children safe in education’, September 2019. Consequently, the school’s safeguarding policy and associated staff training was out of date. Links with the local authority’s safeguarding team were still weak.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, the safeguarding policy is up to date, including with the most recent statutory guidance for September 2020. The policy is available to view on the school’s website.
- All the required safeguarding training for staff was completed at the start of the autumn term 2020, supported by the local authority. Staff know what they need to do if they have a concern about a pupil’s well-being.
- The deputy headteacher, as designated safeguarding lead, has undertaken the required training and has an appropriate understanding of the role. Since the September 2019 progress monitoring inspection, she has established closer links with the authority’s safeguarding officer and the local safeguarding group. This has improved overall confidence and safeguarding practice in fulfilling the required responsibilities.

- In line with government guidance, leaders have put COVID-19 safety arrangements in place for staff, pupils and visitors. Social distancing rules are observed around the school, including in classrooms, corridors and stairways. Daily temperature checks are completed on everyone entering the premises. Regular handwashing and the use of hand sanitiser is encouraged in day-to-day school routines. Pupils have their own resource packs to avoid any potential cross-contamination.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

Paragraph 15

- The standard inspection in January 2018 highlighted that the admissions and attendance register was not maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupils Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Leaders did not follow the agreed procedures for reporting children at risk of missing education to the local authority. Admissions and attendance registers were inaccurate. Leaders were unsure of the whereabouts of pupils when they no longer attended the school.
- This independent school standard was met at the two subsequent progress monitoring inspections.
- However, the standard was not met at the progress monitoring inspection in September 2019. The admissions register did not meet requirements because it was incomplete. The names and addresses of pupils' previous schools were incomplete. The names of 10 pupils admitted in September 2019 were missing. These new admissions were in breach of the legal restriction that came into force on 23 January 2019. During that progress monitoring inspection, leaders told inspectors that three more pupils were due to start at the school in the week commencing 16 September 2019.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, leaders have ensured that the admissions register contains all the necessary detail. The information is up to date with pupils' names, including with those names found to be missing at the previous progress monitoring inspection in September 2019. Pupils' previous school and destination information is now recorded.
- Inspectors checked and confirmed that leaders follow the required procedures when pupils transfer to other schools. This is also the case when parents make the decision to educate their children at home.
- Attendance registers are maintained in line with requirements, including in the use of DfE attendance codes.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- This independent standard was not met at the January 2018 standard inspection because leaders were not managing potential risks well enough.
- This standard was met at the two subsequent progress monitoring inspections.
- At the progress monitoring inspection in September 2019, this standard was not met. The risk assessment policy was out of date and not implemented effectively by leaders.

Off-site risk assessments, for pupils taking part in external visits, were too generic and did not assess specific risks adequately.

- At this progress monitoring inspection, leaders have ensured that the school's risk assessment is up to date and published on the school's website. The policy includes an overview of risk-management roles and responsibilities, and hazard identification, prevention and control.
- An appropriate range of risk assessments and routine checks are in place. The COVID-19 risk assessment takes account of government guidance and advice from the local authority's safeguarding officer. The risk assessment model for pupils' external visits is no longer generic. It has been revised for use once external visits for pupils are resumed.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now 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 required records were incomplete.
- The standards were met at the first progress monitoring inspection in November 2018 and continued to be met in the follow-up progress monitoring inspections in May and September 2019.
- There remains clear evidence that leaders, especially the deputy headteacher, routinely review the single central record of pre-employment checks for new staff. Records are accurate and meet statutory requirements. Other leaders make spot checks on the information held to see that everything is in place.
- The existing staff team provides cover in the case of staff absence, so the school does not use supply staff. Leaders are aware of the required actions should the situation change, and supply staff are needed.
- Leaders ensure that, where relevant, overseas checks are made prior to the appointment of new members of staff.
- 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, the independent school standard relating to the provision of information was not met. This was 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 unmet 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 2008 Act, was not available to view on the school's website.
- The requirements of paragraphs unmet 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 the paragraphs 32(1) and 32(1)(c) were unmet. The school's safeguarding policy was out of date and did not take account of the most recent statutory guidance.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, 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.
- The information provided in the safeguarding policy covers the requirements. This includes the school's response to the DfE's most recent statutory guidance for September 2020.
- The policy sets out clearly what to do in the event of a concern, including for pupils vulnerable to extremism and the 'Prevent' strategy. There is updated reference to COVID-19 safety arrangements in the school.
- Leaders have ensured that this independent school standard is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- This independent school standard was unmet at the standard inspection in January 2018 and remained unmet at the three subsequent progress monitoring inspections.
 - Leaders and governors failed to ensure that all of the independent school standards were met consistently. As a result, at each of these inspections, some standards previously not met remained unmet while other standards previously met were found to no longer be met.
 - The unmet standards were often those related to the welfare, health and safety of pupils.
 - The standard for safeguarding pupils was not met at the standard inspection in January 2018, or at the two subsequent progress monitoring inspections.

- At the progress monitoring inspection in September 2019, leaders had also breached the Secretary of State’s restriction notice, enforced in full on 23 January 2019, by admitting new pupils.
- During this progress monitoring inspection, inspectors found some improvements. Leaders are meeting some of the previously unmet standards. There have been significant improvements in the leadership of areas such as safeguarding arrangements. The quality of planning for pupils’ education has moved forwards since September 2019.
- However, leaders’ and governors’ strategic understanding and oversight remain weak. Too often, governors see the independent school standards as a series of activities to be completed, rather than a way in which to ensure that their work is making the positive difference to pupils that it should.
- Leaders’ monitoring and review arrangements still lack rigour. Leaders’ self-evaluation and school development planning processes are weak. The proprietor, leaders and governors do not have a secure enough understanding of the detail of what is working well and what needs to improve over time. There is a reliance on external support to bring about many of these improvements.
- Given the long-standing failings, the sustainability of the changes implemented with external support is not yet proven or clearly planned. This is especially so in terms of leaders’ ability to evaluate the impact of their own work.
- While this overall standard remains unmet, leaders have ensured that the aspect of 34(1)(c) is now met. Pupils’ safety and well-being constitute a high priority. Staff training and the school’s safeguarding policy have been updated. The policy is available on the school’s website. Attendance registers are appropriately maintained. The school’s admissions register contains all the required detail. Relevant risk assessments are in place, with routine checks to identify any potential hazards. The risk assessment covering safety arrangements for COVID-19 is especially thorough.
- This previously unmet independent school standard remains unmet.

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, as set out in the annex of this report. 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	10154625

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	26
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 DfE to admit up to 60 boys and girls aged five to 16 years.
- Currently, there are 26 pupils on roll. In the primary provision, in Years 2, 3 and 6, there are eight pupils. There are no pupils in Year 5. In the secondary provision, there are 18 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. Although offered places at the Portland Road site, none of the boys previously educated at the Dunstable Road site transferred to Portland Road. Currently, there are two boys on roll – one in Year 2 and one in Year 3.
- 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.
- Ofsted has conducted 12 inspections and evaluations of five action plans. These are:
 - 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.
- 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 material change, reducing the number of pupils registered at the school 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 12 September 2019 progress monitoring inspection, the DfE wrote to the chair of the proprietorial body on 27 November 2019, notifying him of the decision to remove the school from the register of independent schools. At the time of this fourth progress monitoring inspection, the proprietor and the trust are appealing this decision.

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 school's progress in meeting the independent school standards that it was judged to not comply with in the September 2019 progress 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 third progress monitoring inspection in September 2019.
- This is the fourth progress monitoring inspection since the standard inspection in January 2018.
- The inspection was conducted with 30 minutes' notice, by telephone, on the day of arrival. The lead inspector was unable to communicate directly with a senior member of staff after several telephone attempts. In these circumstances, in line with Ofsted's standard procedures, the announcement of the inspection was made by voicemail.
- The proprietor is the same as at the third progress monitoring inspection in September 2019.
- The chair of the proprietorial body was abroad and not available to meet inspectors during this fourth progress monitoring inspection. In the absence of the chair of the proprietorial body, the deputy chair of governors represented him in meetings with inspectors.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, 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 short visits to lessons and looked, separately, at pupils' work in their books. Lesson visits were conducted observing the COVID-19 safety arrangements in the school. Some lesson visits were completed jointly with the deputy headteacher. A small group of pupils were spoken with informally, appropriately socially distanced, in the playground. Inspectors were unable to hold the usual extended conversations with pupils about their learning because of limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions and the small amount of work in pupils' books.
- 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, admissions and attendance registers.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with two representatives from Luton local authority, including the local safeguarding officer.

Inspection team

Christine Dick, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tracy Fielding

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet 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.

Standards that were unmet at the previous inspection, but inspectors judged that there was insufficient evidence to make a met or unmet decision 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.

Requirements within the paragraphs of the standards that were met previously, but inspectors judged there to be insufficient evidence to make a met or unmet decision at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Standards that were unmet at the previous inspection and are now met at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admissions and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006[13].
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) 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
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 6. Provision of information

- 32(1) The standard about the provision of information by the school is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 32(1)(c) particulars of the arrangements for meeting the standard contained in paragraph 7 are published on the school's internet website or, where no such website exists, are provided to parents and carers on request.

Requirements within the paragraphs of the standards that were unmet at the previous inspection and are now met at this inspection

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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