

Rabia Girls' and Boys' School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	8216001
Unique Reference Number	130331
Inspection number	320750
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



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, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Rabia Girls and Boys School provides full-time education to pupils aged four and a half to sixteen years and was set up in 1996 to serve the local community in Luton and the surrounding areas. The school operates on separate sites for boys and girls taught by male and female staff respectively. All pupils speak English as an additional language and many are multi-lingual. There are no pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities and none with a statement of special educational needs. The school's stated key objective is to teach each pupil the principles of Islam and provide academic education according to the National Curriculum. It 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'. The school works in partnership with a charitable trust. There has been a high turnover of staff and steps have been taken to address this problem. This is the school's first published inspection report.

Evaluation of the school

The school provides pupils with a satisfactory education. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as reflected in pupils' good behaviour, attitudes, and their strong sense of identity. The level of support, care and guidance for pupils is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. The school effectively supplements its curriculum with Islamic sciences, which promotes pupils' personal development well. Attendance is low and punctuality is poor. Managers have worked hard and ensured that all but one of the regulations are met.

Quality of education

The curriculum is satisfactory and balances a broad range of secular and Islamic subjects. The boys' school offers the same subjects as the girls' school. All core subjects are taught according to the National Curriculum. All other subjects including, information and communication technology (ICT), art and physical education (PE) are taught through recognised schemes of work. Arabic is taught throughout the school, and Urdu study begins in Year 7. Provision for PE is adequate. The playground for girls is used to teach a balance of skills and games. The lessons for boys consist of weekly visits to the local gym. Pupils take the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 6 and 9. In Key Stage 4, they

follow courses in nine subjects examined at GCSE level including Urdu, Arabic and Islamic studies. Pupils acquire aesthetic and creative aspects through learning *tajweed* (melodic style of Qur'anic recitation). They say that they very much enjoy learning the art of Qur'anic recitation. The Islamic programme forms one fifth of the curriculum and is taught by specialist staff. The managers have correctly identified that the planning of skills in some areas of the curriculum, such as in history and geography, are being developed. The school also acknowledges that it is in the process of developing opportunities for career guidance for older pupils and consequently, it does not comply with this aspect of the curriculum regulations.

Personal, social, and health education and citizenship are taught mainly through Islamic studies and other subjects. The planning of the curriculum is generally satisfactory. Teachers plan adequately for groups of pupils with different prior learning, but this is inconsistent. Although, good cross-curricular links are made through Islamic Studies, the school does not outline a strategy for raising standards of literacy and numeracy across subjects. Enrichment opportunities have included camping in the Lake District and a visit to the Zoological Museum for the boys and girls. Extra-curricular activities are limited to a lunchtime homework club, booster classes and Qur'anic recitation club. The limited range is also noted by parents and pupils in their response to the questionnaires. An adequate range of resources supports the curriculum including an ICT suite. However, the use of ICT across all subjects is under-developed. At present, the school does not have suitable facilities to undertake the practical aspects of subjects such as science or design and technology. The range of fiction and non-fiction books is limited.

The quality of teaching and assessment is satisfactory overall. Pupils are self-confident generally and enjoy their learning. In good lessons, staff foster positive relationships in the classroom, resulting in a productive learning environment and good use of time. Pupils make very good progress where teachers have secure subject knowledge and set high expectations for pupils' work and behaviour. Consequently, this motivates pupils to do their best, as seen in a Year 6 boys' mathematics lesson, where pupils produced work of high quality and behaved exceptionally well. In less effective lessons, teachers employ a lack of variety in teaching methods and make little provision for different abilities. There is a heavy reliance on whole class teaching and all pupils are offered the same work. Consequently, many pupils work at a level that does not match their abilities, and the more able are not challenged enough. In some lessons, the girls in particular lacked sufficient interpersonal skills to make an effective contribution to class discussions.

There is a satisfactory range of strategies for testing and assessing pupils. The school records identify pupils' levels of attainment and chart their progress as they move through the school. The assessment information is well used by most, but not all, the teachers in planning appropriately matched work for pupils. Teachers' marking is encouraging, but with limited comments on how to improve work.

As a result of the satisfactory teaching and sound curricular provision, pupils are making satisfactory progress overall. Children's attainment on entry is considered to be broadly in line with what is expected of four year-olds. Good progress is evident in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, pupils are making good progress in Year 6 and their attainment is in line with national expectations in English and mathematics. At Key Stage 3 and 4, progress is generally satisfactory, as seen in pupils' books. The girls' work is particularly well presented. While most pupils are aware of the targets set for them, they are not consistently challenged to achieve the higher standards of which they are capable. The GCSE examination results of the girls have declined in recent years, partly due to the high turnover of staff, with less entries and sometimes girls dropping subjects close to the examination time.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good overall. All elements are good except cultural development, which is satisfactory. Although pupils say that they enjoy coming to school, their attendance is below average and punctuality quite poor. This is because the girls are brought in late, especially those arriving by minibuses which are often held up in traffic. Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem well through Islamic Studies and taking part in assemblies. They are able to reflect through many opportunities for prayer and show sympathy for people who need help. They raise funds for Ummah Welfare and other charities, for example, Tsunami. Pupils help in the classroom and round the school; some take on the responsibilities as class monitors to help with tidying up and finding lost properties.

Pupils develop awareness of public institutions and services such as the Fire Service and Police. Pupils' behaviour is good because the staff expectations are consistently high. Pupils understand right from wrong because of the school's strong code of conduct, constantly reinforced by staff. The curriculum supports the development of pupils' tolerance and understanding of different cultures through learning about different religions and countries. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future lives as they acquire adequate basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Some pupils have responsibilities as house captains, but such opportunities are limited, which was confirmed from pupils' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire; many pupils do not feel involved in decisions made in the school.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school's overall provision for welfare, health and safety is satisfactory. All the relevant policies have been developed and suitable training in areas such as first aid has been undertaken. All risk assessments are undertaken. Fire drills are held regularly and recorded, so that all regulations are met.

There is an appropriate policy to combat bullying, and pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. Incidents of bad behaviour are dealt with promptly and firmly. Consequently pupils feel happy and safe. Recent training has been undertaken in child protection and arrangements to safeguard pupils are robust. A good number of staff are suitably qualified to give first aid. There is an appropriate policy in place which complies with disability discrimination legislation.

Pupils bring packed lunches to school and show good understanding of healthy eating.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Prior to appointments being confirmed, appropriate checks are undertaken relating to an applicant's identity, medical fitness and qualifications, as well as with the Criminal Records Bureau. Careful records of checks are kept on a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school occupies two separate sites, for boys and girls respectively. The accommodation and furnishings are suitable for the age range of the pupils. The boys' school is in need of an outdoor playground, and the local community centre is used currently for lessons in PE. The boys' premises were re-furnished recently. The school has compensated for the lack of space by hiring portakabins to accommodate more classes for the girls. The ICT suite, although suitably equipped, is not yet networked. Both sites have a hall used for PE, lunch and recreation. The school has sufficient toilet facilities and adequate provision for pupils who are ill.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides appropriate information to parents. There is a prospectus, which includes the most relevant information. Parents are generally supportive of the school and feel that they receive good information. There is a suggestion box for parents for consultation with the school. The school holds meetings with parents regularly and they receive suitable written reports about their children's progress annually. A small minority of parents feel that they do not receive enough information about pupils' progress and feel hesitant about approaching the school.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school has clear and fair complaints procedures. Feedback from most parents indicates that they are aware of the procedures. The school has not had any formal complaints.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the curriculum (standard 1) and must:-

- provide appropriate careers guidance for secondary age pupils (paragraph 1(2)(g)).

What the school could do to improve further

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

- Share the best teaching practice to develop staff through a rigorous training programme, and ensure appropriate challenge for the higher attaining pupils.
- Develop the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Continue to build up resources to provide specialist facilities for practical science.
- Strengthen procedures to improve attendance levels and punctuality, through working closely with parents.
- Develop pupils', especially the girls', interpersonal skills through a planned programme.

School details

Name of school	Rabia Girls' and Boys' School		
DCSF number	8216001		
Unique reference number	130331		
Type of school	Muslim day school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1996		
Age range of pupils	4-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 120	Girls: 211	Total: 331
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1150		
Address of school	12-16 Portland Road Luton Bedfordshire LU4 8AX		
Telephone number	01582 493239		
Fax number	01582 493239/ 10582 481967		
Email address	admin@rabiaschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs Shaikh		
Proprietor	Mr J Khan		
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora		
Dates of inspection	11–12 March 2008		