

Mehria School

23 Westbourne Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8JD

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- Safeguarding arrangements did not meet statutory requirements in the previous inspection. As intended in the action plan, school leaders have made a start in improving arrangements to safeguard pupils and promote their welfare. Nonetheless, progress in creating a safe culture in the school is still too slow.
- The main barrier to the school meeting this standard is leaders' and governors' lack of understanding of the Secretary of State's statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' for schools and colleges. The latest version came into effect on 1 September 2016. Leaders are unfamiliar with its contents and unaware of the key changes in the new version.
- The designated lead professional for safeguarding is not, as required, a member of the senior leadership team. In addition, the designated lead has not been trained to the required level in safeguarding to fulfil the role. A place has been reserved on a course in November 2016 with the Local Safeguarding Children Board to address this.
- All staff have received some basic training in safeguarding pupils this term, enabling them to identify if pupils are potentially at risk, but staff lack knowledge of the latest statutory guidance.
- Relevant policies, including the safeguarding policy and forms for raising concerns are accessible to staff in all classrooms. The school has been slow to ensure that its safeguarding policy is published on its website because this was not included in its action plan. Albeit out of date because it does not include the key changes required from September 2016, the policy, which is otherwise generally fit for purpose, is now available online as required. Leaders are not ensuring that the contents of the policy are implemented fully in practice.
- All staff, governors and the proprietor have now been vetted by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to check their suitability to work with children. Checks for prohibition orders, and disqualification and restriction orders have not been made. Leaders are unclear about the difference between enhanced DBS checks and those for prohibition orders. Recruitment arrangements ensure that references are sought for every new staff member before they are employed.
- While leaders have made some progress towards meeting the independent school standard, the standard is still not met.

Paragraph 11

- Previously, the school had no written policy for health and safety. This is now written, understood by staff and implemented. Safety checks are made on electrical equipment, although the date for the next check has recently expired. The premises are generally suitably maintained and leaders are now more diligent in meeting their legal obligations in relation to health and safety.
- The proprietor has ensured that this standard is met.

Paragraph 12

- Arrangements for fire safety previously did not meet requirements.
- The proprietor has ensured compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in that:
 - signage to fire exits has improved
 - a bolted exit door found at the previous inspection now has a quick release bar to enable a swift exit should a fire occur
 - fire drills are regular
 - fire extinguishers have been recently checked by the local fire services.
- This standard is met.

Paragraph 15

- Previously the school did not keep an admissions register, and attendance registers did not meet requirements.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that admission and attendance registers are kept up to date and comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- This standard is met.

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

- Arrangements for assessing risk were found to be ineffective in the previous inspection.
- Staff have a responsible attitude to identifying hazards as required in the school's risk assessment policy. They remedy them or reduce risk through sound assessment of the risk. For example, at the previous inspection, a risk assessment had not been carried out to ensure that pupils were kept separate from members of the public using the premises for short periods during the school day. This risk assessment has been completed and a robust system has been introduced. Staff and pupils are aware of it and adhere to it.
- This standard is 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)-(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(3), 18(4), 18(4)(a)-(c)

Paragraph 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i) and (ii), 20(6)(b), 20(6)(b)(i)-(iii)

Paragraph 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i)-(viii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)

- In the previous inspection, inspectors found that the school's single central register of recruitment checks of staff was not compliant with statutory requirements. Details for some members of staff were missing from the register, as well as for two governors. Leaders were unable to provide evidence that the checks had been made.

- The single central register now includes the names of all staff and governors. Each person has been checked by the DBS. Checks are made to confirm the identity of staff, their qualifications and their right to work in the United Kingdom. This information about staff and governors is available in files.
- Leaders are unclear about the difference between a disclosure and barring check, and a prohibition order check. Consequently, the latter has not been made on teaching staff and this does not comply with requirements for the vetting of staff.
- The school could not provide evidence that a person's medical fitness is checked on appointment.
- The school does not have supply staff.
- These standards are not met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(b), 24(c), 24(4)

Paragraph 25

Paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(c)

- Weaknesses in the standards required for the school's premises and accommodation were identified in the previous inspection. The school's medical room for sick pupils did not have a suitable facility for washing. In addition, taps used for drinking water were not labelled correctly.
- The school has met deadlines stated in the action plan for a sink to be provided in the medical room and drinking taps have been labelled correctly. Pupils have access to water throughout the day, drawn from the labelled taps. All other facilities, including toilets, meet the standard. This ensures pupils' health, welfare and safety.
- These standards are met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a-j)

- Previously, not all of the school's information for parents and prospective parents was available. The safeguarding policy was not available on the school's website.
- In its action plan, the school did not set a date to address this. Following the evaluation of the action plan that drew attention to this omission, the school did not update its plan accordingly.
- The safeguarding policy was not available online the day before the inspection but it was seen by inspectors on the day of this inspection. Nonetheless, it is not easy to find. The website is generally difficult to navigate. For example, the most recent Ofsted report is difficult to locate, but it is available. All other information required by parents is available on request.
- This standard is met.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(a-h), 33(i), 33(i)(i and ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i and ii), 33(k)

- The school did not ensure that, where there is a panel hearing of a complaint, one panel member is independent of the management and running of the school.
- This has been corrected by the due date set in the action plan. The complaints policy has been updated accordingly.
- This standard is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Leadership and management were judged to be inadequate in the previous inspection. Leaders, managers and governors failed to implement basic policies and procedures for ensuring pupils' health, welfare and safety. School improvement planning and systems to monitor, evaluate and review work were weak. Governors did not hold school leaders to account. Overall, the school's leadership and management did not ensure that all of the standards for independent schools were met.
- Leaders and governors have made some progress towards making the necessary improvements. They have, for example, addressed areas that are easier to put right such as providing suitable signage and labelling, installing a wash basin in the medical room and making arrangements to keep pupils separate from members of the public accessing the premises during the school day. Leaders have also begun to check the quality of teaching and learning.
- The journey towards meeting all of the independent school standards has begun but progress is too slow. The school has not established a leadership team with clear roles and responsibilities. Too much of the improvement work falls to the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and they are overwhelmed with the workload. For example, the school's action plan required revision after it was evaluated and this has not been done. Without the revisions, the school does not have a useful tool to ensure that all of the independent school standards are met quickly.
- A new chair of the governing body has been appointed who is knowledgeable about the core functions of the governing body. The governing body is better placed now than previously to challenge school leaders. Governors know that the school does well in providing pupils with effective teaching and learning. They are also astute in realising that policies, systems and procedures to ensure that pupils' health, welfare and safety are weak, and that progress in revising them is too slow.
- The school's leaders, managers and governors have not ensured that all of the standards for independent schools have been met.
- This standard is not met.

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. 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.

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State (paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure the suitability of staff and members of the governing body, so that:
 - no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of the Schedule 4 to that Act
 - no such person carries out work or intends to carry out work at the school in contravention of a 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 such direction
 - appropriate checks are carried out to confirm in respect of each such person: the person's medical fitness
 - in the light of the information from the checks referred to above, the proprietor considers that the person is suitable for the position to which the person is appointed
 - and that the checks must be completed before a person's appointment
 - (paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(ii), 20(6), 20(6)(a), 20(6)(a)(i), 20(6)(a)(ii)).
- The proprietor must keep a register which shows that all appropriate checks have been carried out on staff and members of the governing body:
 - 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 other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction
 - in relation to each member of staff, whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed
 - the information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member ('MB') of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained

- the information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of a body of persons named as the proprietor in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007
- whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (6) was made and the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained
- (paragraph 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(b), 21(4), 21(6), 21(7), 21(7)(a), 21(7)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that 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
 - (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must 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).
- The proprietor must comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- The proprietor must make sure that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 15).
- The proprietor must 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 the risks that are identified (paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including – accommodation for the medical examination of pupils; accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility (paragraph 24(1), 24(1)(a), 24(1)(b), 24(2)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils is ensured (paragraph 25).
- The proprietor must ensure that suitable drinking water facilities are provided; toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water; cold water supplies that are suitable for drinking and are clearly marked as such, and the temperature of hot water at the point of use does not pose a scalding risk to users (paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(a), 28(1)(b), 28(1)(c), 28(1)(d)).
- The proprietor must ensure that all of the required information specified in the standard about the provision of information is available to parents and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(1)(b), 32(1)(c), 32(1)(d), 32(1)(e), 32(1)(f), 32(1)(g), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i), 32(1)(j)).

- The proprietor must ensure that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which contains all of the required information specified in the standard (paragraph 33, 33(a), 33(b), 33(c), 33(d), 33(e), 33(f), 33(g), 33(h), 33(i), 33(i)(i), 33(i)(ii), 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii), 33(k)).

School details

Unique reference number	134289
DfE registration number	821/6010
Inspection number	10021869

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 primary school with a religious ethos
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Jamia Islamia Ghousia Trust
Chair	Amna Uddin
Headteacher	Zia Ul Mustafa Qazi
Annual fees (day pupils)	£1,800
Telephone number	01582 484 617
Website	www.mehriaschool.org
Email address	info@mehriaschool.org
Date of previous standard inspection	26–28 January 2016

Information about this school

- Mehria School is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) as a school with a Muslim ethos, for boys and girls. The school 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. A mosque and a funeral service are located within the school's grounds. Classrooms for learning are in entirely separate buildings.
- No pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- All pupils speak English as an additional language and are all bilingual.

- 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 carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- This was the first progress monitoring inspection since the school's previous standard inspection in January 2016, when the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate.
- In June 2016, the school submitted an action plan to the DfE to address areas for improvement identified in the standard inspection. This was evaluated by Ofsted, found to require improvement and was rejected by the DfE.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They met with the chair of the governing body.
- Together with senior leaders, inspectors undertook a tour of the school to check on compliance with the independent school standards for health and safety, including fire safety.
- The inspectors evaluated whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils met the relevant independent school standards.
- Inspectors looked at leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning, the school's complaints policy, its health and safety policy and assessments of issues presenting potential risk to pupils' safety.
- The school's website was checked for compliance with statutory information that should be available online.
- The DfE commissioned Ofsted to conduct this inspection focusing particularly on unmet standards in connection with pupils' health, welfare and safety, the suitability of staff, the school's premises and accommodation, provision of information for parents and pupils, the manner in which complaints are handled and the quality of the school's leadership and management.

Inspection team

Linda Killman, lead inspector
Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop

Her Majesty's Inspector
Ofsted Inspector

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