

INSPECTION REPORT

The Millennium School

Report published in February 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The Millennium School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemsmillenniumschoo.com
Telephone	04-2988567
Address	POST BOX NO.32446. DUBAI
Principal	Mr. Michael Guzder
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / KG 1- 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	3000
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	22nd September to 26th September

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The context of the school

The Millennium School is located in Al Qusais and at the time of the inspection provided education for 3000 students aged between 3 to 17 years.

The school followed the curriculum of the Central Board of Secondary Education – International (CBSE-I) for students in Grades 1 to 10, and the curriculum of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for those in Grades 11 to 12. Students took a range of national and international examinations, including the All India Senior Secondary Examination (AISSE) in Grade 12, the All India Secondary School Certificate (AISSC) in Grade 10, the International Benchmark Test (IBT) as well as the ASSET tests in Grades 3 to 9. Students also participated in international assessments such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS.

There were 169 appropriately qualified teachers, led by the principal and senior leadership team. 13 teaching assistants were deployed to support the children in kindergarten classes. Students travelled from many parts of Dubai and surrounding Emirates to attend the school and almost all were of Indian descent. Approximately 2 per cent of students were identified as having a special educational need and a further 4 per cent were under review at the time of the inspection.

Twelve new teachers had been appointed since the start of the academic year and the principal was in his eighth year as leader of the school.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- The ethos of the school reflected the ongoing, excellent work, in the enrichment of students' personal and social development.
- Outstanding teaching and learning outcomes in English, mathematics and science were in place across Kindergarten and the senior secondary grades.
- Regular review, a broad set of subject choices and relevant, well-supported afternoon activities were among the hallmarks of an outstanding curriculum.

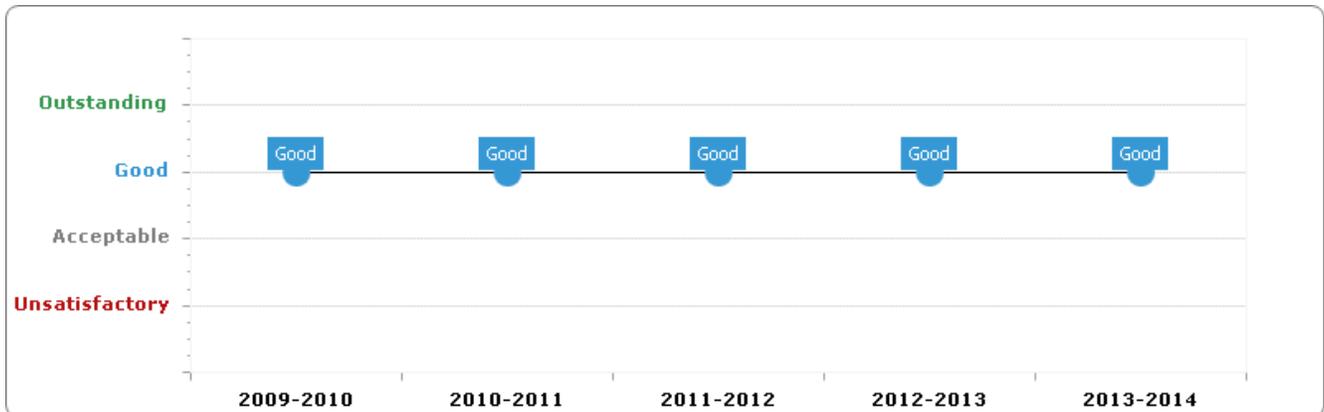
Recommendations

- Raise attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language.
- Improve teaching and learning skills in Cycles 2 and 3.
- Use qualitative and quantitative assessment data to:
 - establish students' starting points accurately and
 - measure regularly the progress of individuals and groups of students, so that clear and appropriate expectations are set.
- Refine the process of the identification of students with special educational needs and ensure the curriculum is consistently modified to meet those needs.
- Ensure governors actively support school improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

- Excellent progress had been made in addressing the quality of the provision in Kindergarten.
- The management and training for staff regarding arrangements for students with special educational needs had improved.
- The school managers have a clear vision but high student numbers in classes in some small rooms hampers its implementation.
- Improvement in attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language remained a challenge for the school.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English				
Attainment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding
Mathematics				
Attainment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding
Science				
Attainment	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Quality of students' learning skills	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

Students' attainment in Islamic Education was good. Knowledge of facts about Islam and its early history was a strong feature of the teaching. However, the overall Quran recitation and application of the learning of students in all phases was weaker. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was acceptable. Students did not consolidate their Arabic speaking skills by holding conversations with other students. They did not use familiar topics to support their learning and skill development. Kindergarten children rapidly reached high levels of speaking in English language, mathematical and scientific concepts. This was achieved through a range of sensory, imaginative and physical tasks. Students' attainment in Grades 1 to 8, was good. The majority of students in English, mathematics and science developed better than expected knowledge and understanding across topics. However a minority of them did not display very strong expressive or reasoning abilities. Most older students used skills of application, hypothesis creation and highly imaginative and individual expression to deepen their understandings and master concepts.

Progress in English, mathematics and science ranged from good to outstanding with outstanding progress being observed in Kindergarten and the secondary phase. Children in Kindergarten made outstanding progress Most became confident, individual and imaginative speakers who displayed excellent thinking and decision-making skills in a range of settings. They used the resources around them to understand how their environment functioned and why. Where progress was less rapid in Grades 1 to 8, too many students were focused on acquiring knowledge only from a teacher-directed, narrow understanding of a concept. Most older students made excellent progress in using their learning to move from predictable, pre-determined expression and thought to creating their own view, plan or solution. This enabled them to be very sure in their response to any challenge. In lessons, most students discussed, wrote and analysed very well.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Students arrived at school well prepared for their lessons and keen to learn. They took responsible attitudes to completing their homework, but did not always know the specific actions they needed to take to improve their work. They took the role of presenting to the class or acting as a 'teacher' seriously, presenting and asking questions with confidence. They collaborated well, when working in groups, for example organising themselves to test how far toy cars travelled on different sorts of surfaces. They made clear connections between their work and real life, for instance recognising their own confused feelings about teenage changes in a poem called Metamorphosis. Undertaking factual research, especially for homework, was common. In a few year groups students were beginning to use their own iPads and other equipment to take notes, but this was not well developed. Students seized opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills

but were limited by a lack of opportunity. In Kindergarten and secondary phase, learning skills were best developed because here the best extended learning opportunities were provided.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development across the school was exemplary. There was meaningful translation of the vision of the school into excellent behaviours, genuinely strong teacher-student relationships and a vibrant, diverse learning environment. Students in all sections were proud and had high levels of awareness of the suite of activities that helped them enjoy so many experiences. Attendance was outstanding. Students had a strong appreciation of Islamic values and the role these played in Dubai's success. Their actions displayed a commitment to preserving local heritage while at the same time seeing themselves as global citizens with close ties to their Indian traditions. The students expressed their understanding of and commitment to environmental issues. The school environment displayed this awareness vividly, even among the youngest students. An excellent work ethic was in place and students participated in a very wide range of community and global activities.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Kindergarten lessons were lively and interesting. Children enjoyed learning and acquiring a range of holistic skills through play, self-expression, physical development activities and through opportunities to share their thoughts and opinions. Throughout school, teachers had high levels of expertise in their subjects and formed strong relationships with students, motivating them to learn. The quality of dialogue between teachers and students was frequently good and encouraged students to extend and develop their ideas, often in depth. This was especially strong in the development of extended writing in English, and in challenging discussions between older students in science. Teachers planned a variety of interesting activities and used resources well. However, a minority of lessons did not provide students of differing abilities with suitable levels of challenge. These lessons were frequently undemanding for the more able students and were too difficult for others. Opportunities were frequently missed to promote critical thinking and enquiry.

The school's good assessment system included the extensive monitoring of students' attainment, compared to international benchmarks in some key subjects. This also often involved students in their own self-assessment. External tests provided relevant benchmarks in attainment in some key subjects which added to the good quality of assessment. The school's software facilitated an appropriate, systematic and consistent approach to monitoring, recording and analysing attainment. However, there was insufficient emphasis on

the need for progress data that was based on robust information and which reflected the school's challenging expectations for each student. Nevertheless, teachers knew their students strengths and weaknesses well. In Kindergarten, where on-going assessment information was constantly used to provide individual children and groups with well-matched activities or support across a range of curriculum areas, children often made excellent progress. There were several other contexts where data had resulted in improved planning, teaching and curriculum but this practice was not yet embedded across the school. Mid-Term Feedback reports for parents provided useful strategies for improvement for each subject.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

The outstanding curriculum had a clear rationale and was aligned with the school's vision. It provided a challenging and balanced education with progression and choice in learning for most students. As a result students' progression through the grades was smooth. Its framework encouraged the staff to tailor content and approaches to meet the needs of its students. It included creative, physical and practical experiences to enrich the development of students both within the regular school hours and after school through the School Enhancement Programme. Extra-curricular activities were wide-ranging. The curriculum focused on physical education, visual and performing arts and instilling leadership through a range of clubs. Students got opportunities for interaction with the local environment and the community as well as for the development of international perspectives.

While it addressed the developmental needs of those students with special needs, the curriculum also encouraged the higher attaining students to excel through a range of activities in school and exposure to interschool competitions in the UAE, India and other international events. The curriculum provided students with opportunities to study subjects according to their choice. The school recognised the need to identify all the different groups of students as fully as possible throughout the school. This had developed well since last year. While provision existed for many groups, the quality of planning and the nature of the experience designed for them was inconsistent. Most students had a wide range of opportunities to develop specific interests and talents.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students were outstanding. Teachers, administrators and all support staff understood their responsibility for care of students. Clear expectations and well established routines ensured student and staff safety was maintained at all times. The building and grounds were clean, well maintained, and accessible to all. Fire drills and emergency evacuations were conducted regularly, with the assistance of local authorities. Student health records, and medicines were locked and stored securely. Clinic staff consisted of three full time nurses and one Doctor. Healthy living was reflected in the curriculum and promoted throughout the school, during assemblies, in the canteen, and at the before and after-school programs. All staff members knew and signed the child protection policy.

Staff-student relationships were generally excellent. Administration of attendance and the checking of punctuality were focused and efficient. The programme for students with special educational needs had improved through the creation of a meaningful structure where teachers could identify a need and process this through the WAVE programme. Students therefore had the chance to receive assistance and intervention. These initiatives were assisting school authorities to identify students with SEN and to begin the necessary planning, to ensure all teachers had appropriate expectations in lessons and could arrange relevant activities.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was outstanding. Senior leaders showed great commitment in their drive to expand, communicate and achieve their mission. Their eagerness to inspire, encourage and develop their students was excellent. Most leaders were very capable and fully aware of their roles, understanding how their plans could be realised. When particular departments or sections dedicated themselves to achieving outstanding skills among their students, they were innovative and professional in their approach, collective in effort, and clear in their timelines to achieve their goals. In such departments and sections, outcomes for students improved very well. The capacity to achieve further improvement was very good.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Most key elements of the responses to the recommendations of the previous inspection were effective. Some aspects were better understood than others. A sustained drive to lead staff professional development, focused upon differentiation in classroom practice. It sought mastery of high level skills for students. However, the monitoring and support for teachers who found change challenging, was inconsistent. In the effort to accelerate school improvement, more needed to be done to understand how to establish and set meaningful progress targets for all students.

There were outstanding partnerships in place between the school, parents and the local community. Parents understood the school's mission well, praising it as a platform for their children in achieving a strong work-life balance for their future careers. They were very involved in the school's work and engaged readily with new online reports. They attended school events enthusiastically and enjoyed easy access to the school personnel when they needed it. The school facilitated opportunities in Dubai and internationally for students to develop charitable links, participate in academic and performing arts events and lead in global fora where their talents and interests could be enhanced.

Governance was good. Supportive structures were in place to hold senior leaders to account, providing well-thought out improvement opportunities for school personnel. The views of parents and other stakeholders were regularly sought, understood accurately and acted upon where appropriate. Increased resources were provided when required and a positive relationship was in place between the GEMS Corporate Office and the school. However, little improvement had taken place in reducing class sizes and the school's development was restricted as a result.

The school operated very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Sufficient and qualified staff ensured that the whole school environment was conducive to effective teaching and learning. The premises were well suited to supporting the curricular and extra-curricular activities of students. The school was extremely well equipped. The school had introduced more ICT resources and equipment. Resources were very well matched to the needs of students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

The SEN programme had the potential to expand and provide for many more students. With the school's new 'WAVE' programme in place this year, students had three opportunities for assistance and intervention. The third opportunity was usually a 'pull-out' programme where students went to the counselor's office and were tutored for approximately 35-45 minutes. Students were identified by their classroom teacher who used observation and a checklist to establish baseline knowledge. The classroom teacher continued the observation and adapted the curriculum if necessary. If the child did not improve, the next placement was Wave 2 where the teacher found other means for assisting the student. Wave 3 was implemented when the child displayed no improvement and needed one-on-one intervention. Only a relatively low number of students had been identified as requiring special education was very low for a school of this size.

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior Secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgments. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	905	41%
	Last year	740	37%
Teachers	149		96%
Students	322		74%

*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

The following statements were based on the survey response at the time of the inspection. The above response figures are the most up-to-date and accurate available prior to publication.

Overall, parents, teachers and students were pleased with the quality of provision in the school. Almost all parents were satisfied with the range of subject choice, their access to teachers and their rates of response. A minority wished to see their children use technology more as a central element within their learning. Almost all teachers were happy with their work but a few expressed concern about their contractual arrangements. They felt very involved in the work of the school, especially self-evaluation, supporting SEN students and modifying their curriculum for all groups. Most students were happy with the education they were receiving, the support they got for making future career choices and the quality of teaching.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:

inspection@khda.gov.ae

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