

INSPECTION REPORT

Al Eman Private School

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Eman Private School

Location	Al Rashidiya
Type of school	Private
Website	n/a
Telephone	04-2858589
Address	P.O. Box No 10003, Khawaneej Road, Rashidiya.
Principal	Sanaa Abdel Badie Alsayed Saker
Curriculum	MOE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3 -15 / Kindergarten to Grade 10
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	531
Number of Emirati students	276 (52%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 28th Wednesday 30th November 2011

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The context of the school

Located in Rashidiya, Al Eman Private School is a private school providing education for boys and girls aged three to 15 years, from Kindergarten to Grade 10. It follows the UAE Ministry of Education curriculum.

At the time of inspection there were 531 students on the roll, of which 276 students, representing 52 percent of the total cohort, were Emiratis. Forty nine students, a little over nine per cent, were non-Arab nationals.

There were 41 full-time teachers in addition to the Principal and four administrative members of staff. All of the teaching staff in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. The school had recently suffered from a high rate of staff turnover in all phases of the school, but particularly in the Kindergarten section. The school's progress towards meeting the recommendations from last inspection was slow.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Al Eman Private School provided an acceptable quality of education. It had made limited progress towards improving the quality of its service since the last inspection. In Kindergarten, the quality of teaching, learning assessment, progress in English, mathematics and science, and the curriculum were all below the expected levels. In Cycle 1 and Cycle 2, students' attainment and progress in all subjects were acceptable with the exception of Arabic as an additional language, where they were both good. Students' good behaviour and their positive attitudes towards learning was a strong feature of the school. The school's arrangements for the safety of students were effective and relationships were good across the school.

The school supported most of its Cycles 1 and 2 students to reach acceptable levels of subject knowledge and basic understanding that were in line with the Ministry of Education curriculum expectations. It did not always enable students to develop their independent, enquiry, research and critical thinking skills. The quality of teaching was acceptable in Cycles 1 and 2 where teachers had adequate subject knowledge but frequently followed the prescribed textbooks. This created few opportunities for skill development. The curriculum in Cycles 1 and 2 had acceptable breadth and balance. There were more opportunities for writing in Arabic and English, but the school did not consistently promote high levels of challenge and

teachers' expectations of students were often low. Links with parents were good while the school governance remained acceptable. The school leaders knew the school's strengths and areas for development and were committed to improvement. The quality of analysis and improvement planning was weak and had led to limited improvements since the last inspection.

Key strengths

- Students' good behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning in Cycle 1 and 2;
- Students' economic and environmental understanding in Cycles 1 and 2;
- The good relationships throughout the school and with parents;
- Systems to ensure students' health and safety.

Recommendations

- Increase children's attainment and progress in Kindergarten by ensuring that the teaching and the curriculum help the children gain independence, develop key skills and learn to find things out for themselves;
- Improve teaching and learning across the whole school through the use of a wider range of teaching strategies and by making learning more active and purposeful;
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that there are regular, well-planned opportunities for skills development and higher levels of challenge in all subjects across the school;
- Ensure that the leaders' improvement planning and the subsequent action taken is sharply focused to make maximum impact on students' attainment and progress.

How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good
English			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable

Students' attainment was acceptable in all subjects in all phases of the school with the exception of Arabic as an additional language, which was good in Cycles 1 and 2 and attainment in Arabic as a first language in Kindergarten, which was also good. In Islamic Education, most students had appropriate levels of knowledge about the Pillars of Islam, its values and about the prophets; their memorisation and recitation of The Holy Qur'an was in line with expectations. In Arabic as a first language, listening was well

developed and their oral communication skills were within the expected levels; they could read and understand age-appropriate texts but their ability to write independently at length for a wide range of purposes was limited. In English, in both Cycles 1 and 2, most students could communicate well orally, could listen and understand instructions easily, and could read and understand simple texts. However, students' ability to write at length to express themselves independently was not well developed. In mathematics, most students achieved the expected levels, but problem-solving skills were underdeveloped throughout the school and no students were performing beyond grade level expectations. Most students in all phases had acquired well developed knowledge and basic understanding of scientific facts and principles. However, students' skills in scientific enquiry and investigation continued to require improvement.

Children in the Kindergarten were making acceptable progress in Islamic Education and Arabic but their progress was unsatisfactory, particularly in Kindergarten 1, in English, mathematics and science. Only a minority had a good idea of sound-symbol relationships, formed letters accurately or recognised an acceptable range of high frequency words in English. They had not developed their understanding of the concept of number in mathematics and had made limited progress in developing their observation and scientific enquiry skills. In Cycles 1 and 2, students were making acceptable progress in learning the key principles of Islam and most made acceptable progress in improving their recitation of The Holy Qur'an. Progress in Arabic, for native and non-native speakers, was steady in all aspects except in developing writing beyond the short responses to direct questions. In English, the attainment of most students was better in speaking and listening than reading and writing, but most achieved expected standards overall by the end of Grade 9. Extended writing remained at an unsatisfactory level across the school. Progress was acceptable overall in mathematics and science but was significantly weaker in problem-solving, real life application of learning and scientific investigation. Students with special education needs made acceptable progress in Cycles 1 and 2 in all subjects, but unsatisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science in Kindergarten.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Attitudes and behaviour	Acceptable	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Acceptable	Good	Good

Almost all students demonstrated good behaviour and attitudes across Cycles 1 and 2 while in Kindergarten, where children were not always helped to develop self-discipline, appropriate behaviour and independence, it was only acceptable. Attendance was good last semester but at the time of the inspection it was acceptable. In Cycles 1 and 2, almost all students had positive attitudes towards school, were keen learners and responded well to adults. They also had a clear understanding of healthy living. Students in Cycles 1 and 2 displayed high levels of understanding of and appreciation for Islam, which they demonstrated well in their own lives. Older students discussed the impact of Islam on the world confidently. Students' appreciation of the culture and traditions of UAE were well developed throughout the school and students supported opinions with valid examples. However, students' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai required further development, especially in Kindergarten and primary. Most students contributed well to the life of the school and understood their role as citizens, despite a limited range of opportunities to put this understanding into action. Students showed respect and consideration for others. Students in Cycles 1 and 2 demonstrated a good understanding of Dubai's social and economic success. Most students understood the importance of environmental sustainability; nevertheless, they rarely participated in activities to support conservation. Kindergarten children demonstrated acceptable understanding of responsibility, as well as of Dubai and age-appropriate environmental concepts.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Teaching for effective learning	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching was unsatisfactory in Kindergarten and acceptable in Cycles 1 and 2. Overall, most teachers had a suitable knowledge of their subjects. However they lacked knowledge of how children learn best, particularly in the younger grades. In Cycles 1 and 2, most teachers had lesson plans with appropriate objectives, but few shared the objectives with students or referred to them during lessons. In the Kindergarten, lessons were not planned with a sufficient variety of activities to suit the needs of young children. Most interactions with students were supportive, but did not encourage them to develop as independent learners. Most teachers' questions required short responses from students. A few teachers asked more probing questions which encouraged students to think for themselves. Most lessons were aimed at the average ability students. The least and most able were not challenged or supported effectively. Teaching emphasised knowledge, but rarely developed enquiry and critical thinking skills sufficiently.

The quality of students' learning was unsatisfactory in Kindergarten and acceptable in Cycles 1 and 2. Students had positive attitudes to their learning and could work without teacher intervention on the short activities they were given. Classroom interactions were dominated by teachers with few opportunities to extend students' thinking. There were insufficient opportunities for students to collaborate, but students co-operated well when given the opportunity to do so. A few connections were made between subjects and previous learning. Enquiry, research and critical thinking skills were under-developed throughout the school. At the Kindergarten phase, children had too few opportunities to investigate, make choices or to organise their own learning. Older students had some opportunities for research, although this often consisted of copying and pasting from the Internet.

Assessment was unsatisfactory in Kindergarten and acceptable in the two other phases. A system for assessing students was in operation, including on-going assessment, diagnostic and summative tests. Students were only rarely involved in assessing their own learning. Simple recording of student's attainment and progress varied in quality throughout the school. Assessment data was analysed to identify students' attainment in tests and this provided the school with a picture of overall attainment of students in each subject. Nevertheless this information lacked sufficient detail to identify patterns and gaps in attainment, and to plan for more effective learning. Teachers used some questioning to find out what students knew, which usually required a straightforward response. Assessment was rarely used to inform the next steps in teaching.

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

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Curriculum quality	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was based on a clear rationale but did not meet the school's aims of enriching learning through technology and science. It was generally broad and balanced. The Kindergarten curriculum had not been enriched appropriately to meet the needs of young learners. For example, practical activities, exploring, finding out and communicating were all lacking. Young children rarely enjoyed first-hand experiences of the world about them and much of their learning was through rote learning and recall. The curriculum in Cycles 1 and 2 was largely driven by text books supported by worksheets. There was progression from year to year but a few students found the transitions from Kindergarten to Cycle 1 and Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 challenging, especially in Arabic and English. Other subjects lacked challenge and curriculum expectations were too low. The curriculum was reviewed after tests but revisions were not always implemented as a result of teacher's findings and initiatives rarely led to changes in student's experiences or attainment. The needs of average students were mostly met but those who were not achieving expected levels and those who were doing well in tests were not challenged or supported effectively. The school had identified the need to further develop cross-curricular links but this had had little impact in lessons. Therefore, connections with real-life and other subjects were weak and did not support learning effectively. There were still too few opportunities for students to solve problems in mathematics or carry out investigations in science. Choice was very limited in all phases. Students' learning was not enhanced through the provision of further opportunities to learn beyond the school and additional extra-curricular activities.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The arrangements for promoting students' health and ensuring their safety were good across all phases. Staff supervised the arrival and departure of students carefully to protect them from potential traffic hazards at the busy start and end of the school day. School buses were well appointed, for example with safety belts for all seats. Staff carried out their duty of care effectively. The premises were maintained well to keep students and others safe and secure. Play areas were shaded, and water was readily available. Minor accidents were usually dealt with appropriately and recorded systematically. The school's arrangements for storing and administering medicines and for practising evacuation in case of fire were appropriate. The quality of snacks in the school shop had been improved, and healthy living was promoted well in most aspects of school life. Further teamwork between staff, parents and the students themselves was needed to ensure that all students ate healthily. New staff had not yet been fully trained in all aspects of child protection.

The quality of support for students was acceptable at Cycles 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory at Kindergarten. Most teachers knew their students' needs well, and relationships were mutually respectful. The school had taken successful action to reduce student absence and improve punctuality. Management of children's behaviour was inconsistent in Kindergarten and Grade 1. A few children were not supported effectively to grow and develop as learners. A few lessons were disrupted. As students progressed from Grades 6 to 9 they received advice about the world outside the school and future careers, but this advice needed to be more systematic and helpful. The school did not have rigorous systems to ensure that the curriculum and teaching were tailored to meet the needs of all students.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Unsatisfactory
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The school principal had a clear vision and strong commitment to improvement. The school aims were regularly reviewed and communicated to all staff members. Roles and responsibilities of all staff including those of the subject and phase leaders were clearly defined. Discussions and meetings were regularly held to review how initiatives were going to be implemented, although these were not always effective. The school leaders had an awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the challenges they faced.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. While the school's evaluations of most of the aspects of its work and the overall performance were accurate, this was based on limited evidence. Analysis and improvement planning were weak. Targets in the school's development plan were too broad; success criteria were not specific enough and not linked to outcomes. A few professional development opportunities were provided as a result of consultation with staff and middle managers. These, however, had only led to limited improvements in the provision and learning outcomes since the last inspection.

Partnerships with parents were good. Strong and effective communication systems were in place. The school provided parents with good support on how to motivate their children to learn. The school listened well to parents and involved them in the school life and kept them informed of their children's overall achievement and of school events. The information shared with them on the students' academic progress and the next steps for learning, however, were not consistently useful. The school used the local community well to enhance learning opportunities through visits to places of interest and inviting guest speakers.

Governance remained acceptable. The Board of Trustees continued to oversee the school's work and there was appropriate representation from many, but not all, stakeholders. It reviewed the school's plans but did

not sufficiently focus on monitoring the effectiveness of the action taken by the school on the quality of provision and learning outcomes.

The daily management of the school's work was acceptable. The school had an adequate number of teaching staff most of whom were suitably distributed and deployed. Most teachers were appropriately qualified but a few, particularly in the lower grades of Cycle 1 and Kindergarten, had limited experience and those teaching English did not always have the necessary skills to do so. Space was adequate in most classrooms and the school premises were well maintained and kept clean. Learning resources, including information and communications technology, were basic and were not always used well. They were limited in mathematics, science and in Kindergarten.

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 judgements. 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	35	9%
	Last year	115	29%
Teachers	11		27%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

Only a few parents responded to the survey this year, a significant decline from last year. They agreed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects and enjoyed lessons. They indicated that their children were safe at the school and while on buses. Parents responded positively about the provision at the school. About a quarter of teachers responded to the survey. They were very positive in their opinions of the school and almost all agreed that inspection had helped to improve it.

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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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