

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Adab Iranian Private School

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, [info@khda.gov.ae](mailto:info@khda.gov.ae), [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae)

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Adab Iranian Private School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	adabschl.eim.ae
Telephone	04 - 2633405
Address	Dubai - Al Qusais
Principal	Khosro Alimardan Farahmand
Curriculum	Iranian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 11
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	468
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	Monday 21st to Wednesday 23rd November 2011

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## The context of the school

The Adab Iranian Private School is situated in Al Qusais, Dubai. The school opened in 1989 and moved to its present site in 1994. At the time of inspection, the school had a total roll of 486 students, aged from three to 18 years. Almost all students were of Iranian nationality and a few were from Afghanistan. There were a few students with special educational needs. There was a high level of student mobility and the numbers of students were increasing.

In the Kindergarten, the curriculum was taught in Farsi. Students from Kindergarten 2 to Grade 5 chose between English and Farsi options, but from Grades 6 to 12, the language of instruction was Farsi. Boys and girls were taught in separate sections from Grade 6. Students were entered for the examinations provided by the Iranian Ministry of Education at the end of Grade 11. The school followed the Iranian Ministry of Education curriculum.

There were 30 full-time teachers. All teachers had appropriate teaching qualifications and were effectively deployed. There were also four teaching assistants. Students were grouped into 30 classes.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

## How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The Adab Iranian Private School had not been previously inspected. It provided an acceptable quality of education with some good features. The outstanding aspect of the school was students' attitudes and behaviour in middle and high school. The quality of teaching and learning was acceptable across the school.

## Key strengths

- The positive impact of additional English lessons in helping to raise attainment for students in the primary grades;
- The students' positive attitudes to school and their learning;
- The high quality of relationships between teachers and students, which was key to establishing good behaviour;
- The school leaders' willingness to identify, plan and implement improvements;
- The very strong sense of community and productive links with parents.

## Recommendations

- Ensure that the curriculum for Islamic Education and the time allocation for Arabic as an Additional Language meet the UAE Ministry of Education requirements;
- Provide students with more opportunities to develop critical thinking, discussion, practical and enquiry skills;
- Create opportunities for students to recognise, suggest and initiate improvements to their learning;
- Use data analysis to help plan lessons which challenge the more able and support those who find learning difficult;
- Develop the capacity of all subject co-ordinators to monitor students' learning more effectively.

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

	Pre-School	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The attainment of children in the Kindergarten was acceptable in all subjects. However, they had only limited opportunities to learn through practical activities that developed enquiry and independence. In primary grades, attainment was acceptable in all subjects except science, where it was good. In mathematics, students were skilled in carrying out calculations, but relied heavily on single strategies to solve problems. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was acceptable with basic writing skills as the strongest aspect. Attainment in both middle and high school was good in mathematics and science and acceptable in English. In English the emphasis on using accurate grammar rather than developing speaking and writing hindered the development of the language. For example, most students were able to

give learned phrases to answer questions, but few could write independently. In science, secondary and middle students used investigational and analytical skills well to predict outcomes of experiments. They tested and shared their predictions using high order and critical thinking.

Kindergarten children's progress in all subjects was acceptable but limited by the formal curriculum with little choice and few opportunities to learn through play. In the primary and middle phases, progress was acceptable in Arabic, English and science but good in mathematics. Progress was acceptable in English because students gradually developed the four aspects of language but did not relate English learning to the other subjects. In Grades 11 and 12, progress was acceptable in English and science but good in mathematics. Progress in science was hindered by too few practical investigations to develop scientific enquiry skills. In most grades and subjects students did not have sufficient opportunities to build on earlier learning or the skills they had acquired. Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress in all subjects, but their progress was limited by too few opportunities to consolidate their understanding and learning.

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Pre-School	Primary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

Attitudes and behaviour were good in Kindergarten and primary and outstanding in middle and high school. Behaviour in a few primary classes was only acceptable. Almost all students were enthusiastic about learning and proud of their school. A few students in the school showed little awareness of healthy living life styles, took little exercise, and ate unhealthy food. Students' understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture was acceptable in the Kindergarten and primary and good in middle and high school. Students showed a good awareness of Dubai's multi-cultural society and world cultures in middle and high school. When given the opportunity to do so, most students enjoyed taking responsibility but the views of the student council were not always used to influence decisions about learning. Most students were aware of factors which influenced Dubai's growth and its importance in the Gulf and most students had a good economic and environment understanding. Senior students could explain changes in the economy and understood the critical importance of energy use and the subsequent decisions for all societies about sustainability. Students enthusiasm for school was reflected in outstanding attendance and good levels of punctuality.



## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-School	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching was acceptable throughout the school. Most lessons were well organised and planned so that teachers guided students to complete the tasks in textbooks accurately. Teachers used secure subject knowledge to present information clearly, and praised students when they were able to recall their knowledge in spoken answers. This positive dialogue meant that classroom relationships were strong and although not all students had the confidence to contribute, most knew the correct answers before they wrote them in their workbooks. More able students were often capable of anticipating the correct responses so were not sufficiently challenged which limited their progress. Students who found the work difficult relied on recording answers without always understanding their meaning. Where teachers used their expertise to extend textbook exercises, the level of student involvement improved and learning was more effective.

Learning was acceptable throughout the school. Students were highly disciplined and most were able to sustain their concentration in lessons. Some younger students in primary were still adjusting to formal learning routines and were not always attentive or able to take turns. Most students made a commitment to learning by following teachers' instructions which included repeating phrases in language lessons and copying mathematical processes. However, this limited their opportunities to think critically and independently, as well as to consider how their learning was relevant to real life situations. Students collaborated to complete planned tasks but this did not always improve their progress, as they lacked sufficient skills to learn together successfully. Across the school there were insufficient opportunities for students to research and debate new ideas, and learn by enquiry, research and deduction.

Assessment was acceptable throughout the school. The school had useful entry data for all students but had yet to develop a system for tracking progress from this starting point. Instead, routine testing procedures were used to create comprehensive records of students' attainment. This information was shared regularly with parents and checked to identify students requiring extra support in addition to lessons. Although teachers knew students' strengths and weaknesses, the information was not widely used to modify plans and sustain support during lessons. Teachers marked students' work regularly, but this was usually limited to acknowledging completion of tasks. Opportunities were missed to give students written feedback about how to improve further. Some teachers used a variety of questioning techniques to assess retention of knowledge from one lesson to the next and gauge the levels of understanding as new ideas were introduced. As a result they were better able to adjust their teaching for more effective learning.

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

	Pre-School	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was acceptable. The Iranian-based curriculum was textbook driven and limited in breadth, balance and choice. However, the school did not comply with the UAE curriculum for Islamic Education and the Arabic curriculum did not meet the statutory requirements of the Ministry of Education. Good transition systems allowed students to move smoothly from one phase to another. The curriculum was reviewed regularly and a strength was the primary 'International Curriculum' which focused on the acquisition of English skills and had a positive impact on literacy. However, as most lessons were closely aligned to the textbooks, the curriculum was not always matched to students' different abilities. Children in the Kindergarten and students in the primary grades had too few opportunities to become independent learners, to share, explore, investigate and work together. Elsewhere in the school, there were limited opportunities for students to be fully involved in more independent learning, research and critical thinking activities. Students enjoyed extra-curricular activities, including inter-school competitions, soccer, basketball, handball and chess, as well as visits to the zoo, museum and mosque. There were few links with the community and this limited the enrichment of learning.

## How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-School	Primary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

Provision for the health and safety of students was good. All members of staff showed high regard for students' personal well-being. The school provided a safe and secure environment. Maintenance and repair of the site was good and safety checks and routines, such as emergency procedures, were carried out regularly. Entrances to the site were appropriately staffed and monitored throughout the day. The ground floor of Kindergarten area was only accessible through a locked door and children were carefully watched when using indoor and outdoor play areas. Buses were well maintained but the use of seat belts was not enforced and this placed students travelling in the front seats of buses at risk. All parts of the accommodation were routinely cleaned. Classrooms were safe and specialist equipment and resources, such as chemicals for science, were stored securely. Students were well supervised at breaks through discrete monitoring by teachers. Supervision was equally good on school transport, with escorts on each bus. Medical care was good and all students' personal, medical and academic records were stored securely. Supervision of students being collected by their parents at the end of the day was less rigorous. The school nurse led a health awareness programme for all students; however, this good initiative was undermined as the school shop sold sweets and chocolates. All staff and students were aware of child protection arrangements and students felt comfortable in talking to staff about sensitive issues.

Relationships between staff and students in the Kindergarten and primary sections were good; in middle and high school they were outstanding. Behaviour was managed discretely throughout the school and there were well developed systems for monitoring students' well being and personal development. The school counsellor provided individual guidance to support students with special educational needs; however, the recent reduction in the level of support prevented further whole school development. As a result individual learning programmes were not in place and progress was restricted for those students. Students in higher grades had the benefit of guided advice on their options for university and higher education. The reliable systems for monitoring and recording attendance and punctuality were highly effective and therefore, student absence and lateness were rare.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The Principal, with senior colleagues, showed determination in planning and implementing school improvement through clear vision and direction. They were not complacent and acknowledged their increased understanding of the school through the inspection process. Through the distributive leadership, the school had raised attainment in mathematics and science but not in all other subjects. Most middle managers however, did not fully understand the required improvements to be made in their areas, nor did they have sufficient insight into how to improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment. Nevertheless, the school showed the capacity to deliver sustainable improvements over time.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable overall, and strongest at the whole-school level. Systems to evaluate performance centered on the advisory group's regular monitoring and school leaders used it to determine improvement plans. Analysis of attainment data was undertaken as part of the monitoring process, but this lacked sufficient depth to pin-point particular aspects of teaching and learning in need of improvement. Lesson observations were regular but did not pay sufficient attention to the effects of teaching upon learning by students.

The school's partnership with parents and the community was good. Parents were highly supportive of the school and regularly organised events, which made a valuable contribution to the school community. In turn, the school provided parents with clear information about their children's progress through report cards, meetings and open days. As a result, parents gained some understanding of how to help learning at home. A group of parents said that the report cards would be more useful if comments and test marks were included. The school had not taken advantage of potential links within the community, for example, to enhance the curriculum for business studies by working with local commercial organizations.

Governance was acceptable. The advisory group consisted of a wide range of stakeholders including, the leadership team, and representative of the owners, staff and parents. They had a broad understanding of the school's strengths and used their monitoring to identify priorities for improvement. They consulted

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parents routinely before making changes and used their views to influence actions. However, they had not addressed the school's compliance with MoE requirements for the number of lessons to be taught in Arabic, nor had they provided sufficient challenge to address weaker areas of teaching and variability in attainment and progress across subjects.

The management of staffing, resources and facilities was acceptable. Staff members and students knew and followed routines so the school ran smoothly, while allowing students and children to learn in a happy and safe setting. Facilities for physical education, particularly for boys, were good. The school had a sufficient number of qualified teachers, but not all had good understanding of how to share their subject knowledge and meet the needs of all students. Resources for technology, including computers and practical work in science were limited. Fiction and non-fiction books in Farsi, English and Arabic were limited in supply.

## 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	16
	Last year	The school was not inspected in 2010-2011
Teachers	2	4%
Students	0	0%

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

A very few parents responded to the survey. Those who responded agreed that their sons were making good progress in the key subjects and were safe at the school. All agreed that the teaching was good, that their sons enjoyed lessons, and that the school was well led. Teachers indicated that there was insufficient time in the day to prepare lessons and assess the learning of students.

## 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.

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## 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](mailto: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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