

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Bradenton Preparatory Academy

Report published in April 2014

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Bradenton Preparatory Academy

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Location                              | Dubai Sports City  |
| Type of school                        | Private  |
| Website                               | <a href="http://www.bradentonprepdubai.com">www.bradentonprepdubai.com</a> |
| Telephone                             | 04-4493600   |
| Address                               | Dubai Sports City  |
| Principal                             | Dr. Connie Weiner  |
| Curriculum                            | US   |
| Gender of students                    | Boys and Girls   |
| Age / Grades or Year Groups           | 4-17 / KG 1-Year 12  |
| Attendance                            | Acceptable   |
| Number of students on roll            | 530  |
| Largest nationality group of Students | US   |
| Number of Emirati students            | 4 (less than 1 %)  |
| Date of the inspection                | 17th to 19th February 2014   |

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| The context of the school .....  | 3  |
| Overall school performance 2013-2014 .....   | 4  |
| Key strengths .....  | 4  |
| Recommendations .....  | 4  |
| Progress since the last inspection .....   | 5  |
| Trend of overall performance.....  | 5  |
| How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills? .....          | 6  |
| How good is the students' personal and social development? .....                   | 7  |
| How good are teaching and assessment?.....   | 7  |
| How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students? .....     | 8  |
| How well does the school protect and support students? .....                       | 8  |
| How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....                    | 8  |
| How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?..... | 13 |
| How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?.....                    | 14 |
| What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....                         | 15 |
| What happens next? .....   | 16 |
| How to contact us .....  | 16 |

## The context of the school

Located in Dubai Sports City, Bradenton Preparatory Academy enrolled students representing over 60 nationalities. The majority of students had English as their first language.

The school was in the beginning phase of adopting the American Common Core Curriculum Standards for Math and English, and inquiry-based, Next Generation Science Standards. Students sat for the MAP and PSAT tests. The ability to compare results over time was difficult due to lack of previous data and the large number of students new to the school. International and national comparative assessment data was limited.

There were 53 full and part-time qualified teachers along with 16 teaching assistants. The school leadership comprised of the Head of School, Elementary Principal, Assistant High School Principal, Kindergarten Coordinator, two counsellors and two instructional coaches. Fifty-six teachers (71%) of staff were new to the school this year.

The school had seen significant growth with student enrolment increasing by 280 students (53%) from the previous inspection. Less than one percent of the students were Emirati. Of the current school enrolment of 530 students, 374 (71%) were new to the school this year with the majority also being new to the UAE. Class sizes ranged from 14 to 24 students.

## Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- Positive and transparent culture of the school which was modelled by school leaders;
- The consistently good quality of support for English language learners (ELL);
- Positive attitudes and behaviour of students;
- Outstanding provision for student health and safety in all aspects of the school.

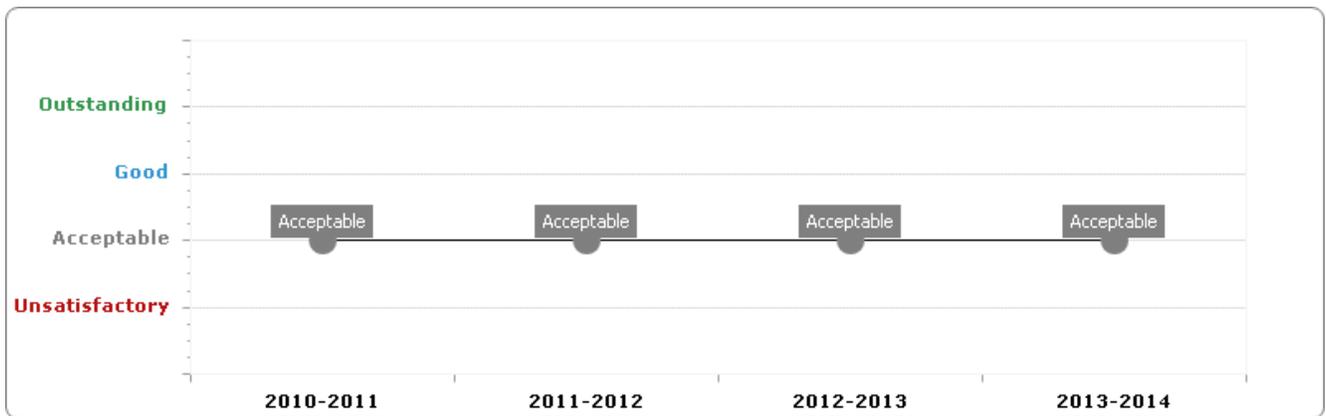
### Recommendations

- Work closely with the governing body to improve teaching and learning, especially in the areas of Islamic Studies and Arabic;
- Ensure greater rigour across all disciplines to improve students' attainment and progress;
- Improve the curriculum to ensure direction, smooth transitions and challenge;
- Improve teaching and learning across all phases of the school;
- Use externally validated assessments to moderate the school's own assessments and to give staff, the students and their parents, a realistic view of students' attainment in an international context.

## Progress since the last inspection

- The new school management had made some progress towards the previous inspection's recommendations;
- The management structure of the school had been significantly revised;
- The school had begun the accreditation process with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

## Trend of overall performance



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

|   | KG             | Elementary | Middle         | High           |
|---|----------------|------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Islamic Education</b>                |                |            |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>Arabic as a first language</b>       |                |            |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>Arabic as an additional language</b> |                |            |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Unsatisfactory |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>English</b>                          |                |            |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Good           | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Good           | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                      |                |            |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Acceptable     | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Acceptable     | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>Science</b>                          |                |            |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Acceptable     | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Acceptable     | Acceptable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |

[Read paragraph](#)

|                                      | KG         | Elementary | Middle     | High       |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Quality of students' learning skills | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

|  | KG         | Elementary | Middle     | High       |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Personal responsibility  | Good       | Good       | Good       | Good       |
| Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Community and environmental responsibility   | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

|                                 | KG         | Elementary | Middle     | High       |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Assessment                      | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

|  | KG         | Elementary | Middle     | High       |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum quality   | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

|                    | KG          | Elementary  | Middle      | High        |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 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                                    | Good         |
| Self-evaluation and improvement planning                 | Acceptable   |
| Parents and the community                                | Good         |
| Governance   | Good         |
| Management, including staffing, facilities and resources | Good         |

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment in all subjects and phases was generally acceptable, except in Islamic Education where it was unsatisfactory in middle and high phases and Kindergarten English which was good. In Islamic Education, elementary students had acceptable levels of knowledge, skill and understanding. In middle and high schools links were weak between what students learned in the classroom and their own daily life practices. Holy Qur'an recitation and memorisation skills were acceptable in elementary but underdeveloped in middle and high school. In Arabic as a first language, students' listening, speaking and reading skills were in line with expectations but writing skills were limited. In Arabic as an additional language listening skills were acceptable in elementary but limited in middle and secondary. Speaking skills were restricted to the daily dialogue repeated in the classroom. Reading skills were confined to a narrow range of familiar words in the text. Students' writing skills were under-developed across the school. In English children in Kindergarten retold stories, recalled main characters and events in appropriate sequence. Fluency and accuracy in writing was a challenge for the majority of students in the other phases. Elementary and Kindergarten students could explain and define the concepts they were working with in mathematics, building vocabulary and clarifying their thinking. Older students had a range of skills in business mathematics, algebra and calculus. Most students met expectations set by the curriculum standards. In science, students had gained appropriate knowledge and understanding during lessons.

Progress was acceptable in all subjects and phases apart from in Kindergarten English which was good. In Islamic Education students in elementary were starting to make progress in linking Islamic historical events such as the life of Prophet (PBUH) and his companions to their current relationships in the society and to their own life. The progress in Holy Qur'an recitation in middle and high school was limited. In Arabic as a first language, students made acceptable progress in most language skills except in writing where they were given insufficient opportunity to write. In Arabic as an additional language, students made acceptable progress in language acquisition, especially in learning new vocabulary and using these to make sentences and express ideas. Progress in the skills of writing was limited. Students made expected progress in reading and could analyse themes, structures and ideas. In English children in the Kindergarten confidently read signs, labels, notices and messages in the classroom. Students in all phases of the school worked well to gain new understanding. In mathematics the development of number sense and reasoning remained the area in greatest need of improvement for all students. Most students increased their knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts in relation to their previous learning. Students made acceptable progress in science but there were inconsistencies between groups of students across the school.

[View judgements](#)

## Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning skills was acceptable across all phases. Students in the high school were not sufficiently aware of their own progress and strengths in learning and students in elementary were unsure how to improve. They often required close supervision to complete tasks. Working in pairs, groups and teams was leading to more focused collaborative practices. However, some group activities in all phases were insufficiently planned and did not always allow students time to complete written work accurately and neatly. Students in middle and high school extended their own learning using ICT. During lessons in English and science, high school students showed some proficiency in finding new information and applying that learning to real life situations. The development of English language learning skills was successful.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students' personal responsibility was good across all phases. Students had good attitudes towards all aspects of school life. They behaved well and were exceptionally polite and welcoming. Relationships were positive and respectful. Students followed the school's advice about healthy life styles. Attendance was acceptable although punctuality to school and lessons was generally good.

Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness were acceptable. Students had good understanding of their own culture and celebrated it from time to time. They were aware of cultural diversity and breadth from around the world. However, they demonstrated only a basic understanding of Islamic values and of the relevance and impact of these values on everyday life in Dubai. Their appreciation of the culture and traditions of UAE were under-developed particularly in the Kindergarten and elementary phase.

Students' community and environmental responsibility was acceptable. Students across the school showed some social responsibilities. Most felt confident in sharing their ideas but the Student Council's voice was not influential. Students understood the importance of protecting the environment at the local level and more broadly. However, students' abilities to initiate or take part in schemes to support conservation and the sustainability of the environment was underdeveloped.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable. Teachers had a strong understanding of their subjects. They used a variety of activities in Kindergarten and the elementary school to help students learn. A range of teaching strategies enhanced the learning environment. Some teachers, particularly in the middle and high schools, used good questioning techniques to encourage discussion and promote independent thinking. Across the school, lessons were generally well planned, and presented in a positive, encouraging manner. The creative use of resources was evident. A few teachers were using Information, communication technology to enhance their lessons, with positive results. However, planning of teaching was not aligned closely enough to meet the needs of all students. The teaching of music, art and physical education enriched the school experience for students and promoted the development of skills and talents beyond the core subjects.

The quality of assessment was acceptable. A consistent and effective system of assessment across all age levels was in the early stage of development. School leaders were working to ensure that regular and accurate assessment data of a high quality became a feature of the school. A significant forward step had been taken with the introduction of testing to compare students' progress against international benchmarks. Nevertheless, the results of this testing had not been used to improve teaching and support for all students. Informal assessment was strong in many subjects and grades. Most teachers were aware of the strengths and gaps in their students' understanding. Oral feedback and encouragement were generally consistent across the school. Many teachers were aware of common errors made in their subjects, and were able to guide their students toward improvement strategies. In the younger years, students' accomplishments were celebrated regularly.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable across all phases of the school. School leaders continued to review and update the curriculum a regular basis. It was broad and balanced with no significant gaps. Although it was based on Common Core and Next Generation standards, it lacked cohesiveness. Children in the Kindergarten had appropriate opportunities to learn through play. Transition arrangements were at early stages and not fully effective to ensure students were ready for the next stages of their learning. Continuity and progression planning were not effective to date and a number of students struggled to keep up as they moved to higher grades. Adequate enrichment arrangements were in place. Although extra-curricular links were being established as the curriculum developed, they were not effectively planned or implemented.

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The curriculum design was of acceptable quality. An appropriate range of subject choices were available to students such as sports, drama, music and languages. Students could choose from a range of after-school activities. English Language Learners were provided with effective support. Arabic as an additional language was offered in Kindergarten and beyond Grade 9. As the school continued to enrol more students, the curriculum had not been effectively modified and students' individual needs were not always met. There was no additional challenge for gifted and talented students. Students' interest and aspirations were not addressed well.

[View judgements](#)

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

Provision for health and safety was outstanding in all phases of the school. Policies and procedures were in place and carefully followed. Buses were well managed and carried appropriate safety equipment and personnel. The facilities were of a high quality, well maintained and suitable for all students. There were lifts for two story buildings. The clinic was well staffed with a full time doctor and nurse. Detailed records were kept for all students. Healthy life styles were promoted by medical staff and supported by healthy food choices in the canteen. A child protection policy was in place and school personnel were trained and parents were informed. Clear procedures were in place to report incidents.

The quality of support was good across all phases. Interaction between teachers and students was based on understanding and mutual respect. Behaviour management was understood clearly by students and staff and policies were implemented sensitively. Clearly written processes existed for managing student attendance and punctuality. A well-articulated identification and admissions policy was in place and supported the inclusion of students with special education needs. Programmes to identify gifted and talented students had not been developed. The student support team had facilitated high levels of communication with parents. English language learning support teachers were successful in advancing the progress of students. A comprehensive program for assistance with university applications and placement was provided.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the leadership was good. The Head of School was new to the position but had an informed understanding of the school and its needs, which was communicated well to all stakeholders. Leadership was shared in a collaborative model with appropriate authority and accountability to perform the assigned responsibilities. Communications with staff, parents and Governors had improved and was more consistent, and informative. There was a clear focus on improving student learning.

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Self-evaluation and improvement planning was acceptable despite the recent change of management and high turnover of staff. Action plan items from the previous report had been addressed but not completed. The current action plan was appropriate but there had been insufficient time for it to become embedded and have an effect on students' attainment and progress. Staff had not had sufficient professional development to enable them to assist in the analysis of the successes and shortcomings of the action plan. Nevertheless, the process and impact of school improvement planning was evident in several areas, although Islamic Education and Arabic as a first and as an additional language, were insufficiently targeted.

Relationships with parents were good. Parents expressed satisfaction with the nature of communication and the quality of its leadership. Student progress was consistently shared with parents via electronic and face-to-face means and was a strength. Links with parents of children with SEN were particularly good.

Governance was good and had committed support and personnel to the school. Governors were actively engaged in the planning and conduct of management related issues, working collaboratively with the school leaders. It had not ensured that the school was sufficiently well resourced to meet the learning needs of all groups of students.

The school was efficiently and effectively managed. Leaders and staff were well qualified and appropriately placed. However, most teachers were new to the school this year. The facilities were of a high quality and well maintained, providing an excellent learning environment. Some resources for teaching and learning were available but these were not sufficient to meet the needs of the students.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school was inclusive in both its policy and practices for students with special education needs (SEN). The identification, admissions policy and prescribed procedures were understood by parents and teachers. Systems and processes to identify gifted and talented students were the next step in that process for the SEN team. The school's policy on identification meant that key interventions and support were put in place at the earliest opportunity. Students had made acceptable progress overall, with some good progress in Islamic Studies in the elementary phase and in English and mathematics in the middle and high phases. English language learning support staff were especially successful in advancing the progress of students. The student support team ensured that teachers met with parents and discussed what interventions or support their children needed. The support team had focused on developing a wide range of individual education

plans which were targeted to meet the specific needs of students. Their commitment and dedication and high expectations for students were evident in both their approach to planning and in monitoring progress. However, teachers had not received sufficient professional development to be able to differentiate and modify the Common Core Standards Curriculum so that they could successfully and consistently meet the needs of students with SEN.

## How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

The quality of teaching in Arabic as first language was inconsistent. Teaching in the elementary phase was strongest in the elementary than in middle and secondary phases. Almost all teachers had secure subject knowledge but a few teachers did not understand about appropriate language acquisition strategies. Adequate levels of student-teacher interaction were strong features. The quality of questioning was adequate overall, although these rarely promoted critical or creative thinking. Teachers' feedback to students did not enhance their language skills, particularly speaking. The quality of lesson planning was generally acceptable but was too focused on the coverage of content rather than on students' learning needs. It rarely included sufficient focus on independent learning. Some lessons were dominated by teacher talk which restricted students' learning time. Teachers' expectations were often modest and did not help all students achieve their full potential. The school curriculum for Arabic as a first language was in line with the Ministry of Education in the UAE requirements. However, it was strictly based on textbooks and lacked the appropriate enrichment of every day examples to make it relevant to students. Curriculum modifications were insufficient to accommodate all groups of students' language needs. Opportunities for writing, across the school, were limited and needed to improve significantly.

## 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 | 121 | 27%        |
|                          | Last year | 82  | 34%        |
| Teachers                 | 42        |     | 71%        |
| Students                 | 50        |     | 60%        |

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

A minority of the parents and a majority of teachers and students responded to their surveys. Parent survey results were mostly positive and were consistent with the comments received during the parent interviews. However a large proportion of "Don't Know" responses reflected the large number of families new to the school. Overall, the majority of parents expressed satisfaction with the school and the new leadership. They believed that the teachers were providing a good quality of education for their children, especially in English, mathematics and science. A minority of parents felt there were some issues regarding bullying. The majority of the teaching staff were positive about the new leadership and the direction of the school. A few individuals expressed dissatisfaction with some personnel decisions and the lack of available resources. A few students also expressed concern with the lack of resources and the inability to use the Sports City facilities. Most students felt that teaching was good however not all were positive with regards to Arabic instruction.

## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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