

INSPECTION REPORT

The International School of Choueifat - Dubai

Report published in April 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The International School of Choueifat - Dubai

Location	Al Sufouh
Type of school	Private
Website	www.iscdxb-sabis.net
Telephone	04-3999444
Address	P.O.Box 21935, Dubai
Principal	Hisham Hassan
Curriculum	SABIS (UK/US)
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 13
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	4,001
Largest nationality group of Students	Arab
Number of Emirati students	281 (7%)
Date of the inspection	3rd March to 7th March 2013

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The context of the school

The International School of Choueifat Dubai was opened in 1993. The current roll is 4,001, a slight increase compared with last year. Arab students from a range of nationalities were the most numerous. Overall, students came from over 70 countries. Emirati students made up about seven per cent of the roll. The majority of students learned Arabic as a first language.

The school was part of the SABIS group and the curriculum was designed to prepare students for a range of examinations. Students were taught as a whole class and frequent testing was an important feature of the school's curriculum. External examinations offered were UK and US based. IGCSE, AS and A-levels were based upon the National Curriculum of England and Wales, while AP and SAT tests were of US origin. Not all students chose to take external examinations. Children started in Kindergarten aged three years and transferred at five years of age to Grade 1 in the primary school. Most students completed their education in Grade 12, with only a few completing a 13th Year. Staffing was generally settled although the Senior Leadership Team was new.

The school had 154 teachers. Few had a recognised teaching qualification. They were supported by 35 teacher assistants. The school had not identified any students as having a special educational need.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Older students' good attainment in English, mathematics and science;
- Students' positive attitudes to each other and to the staff and the students' excellent attendance record;
- A testing system that noted where students had difficulty so that they could be given additional work;
- Good arrangements for students' health and safety;
- The student life organisation programme provided students with opportunities to take responsibility and experience enjoyment in their learning.

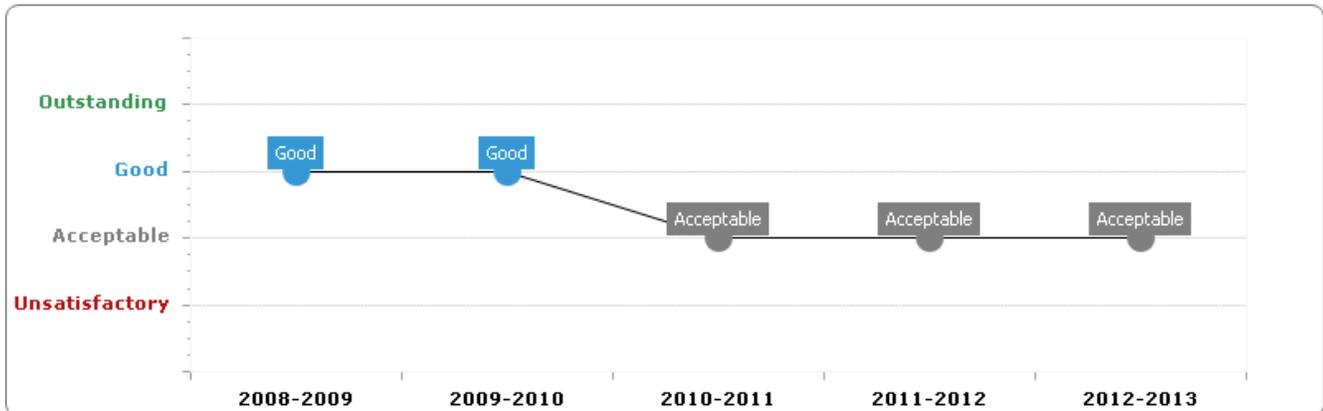
Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language and ensure statutory compliance;
- Ensure that lessons in Kindergarten are planned and taught to meet the learning needs of young children;
- Improve teaching and learning in the primary section;
- Improve the accuracy of school self-evaluation against external criteria.

Progress since the last inspection

- Children's attainment and progress in English in the Kindergarten had improved;
- High school students' attitudes and behaviour and their community and environmental responsibility had improved;
- Middle school students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness and their community and environmental understanding had improved;
- There had been some improvement to facilities and resources;
- The school had made little other progress since the last inspection because it did not take action on the report's recommendations.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Community and environmental responsibility	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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	Unsatisfactory
Governance	Unsatisfactory
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

In Islamic Education, students had a limited knowledge of Islamic concepts. They had a basic knowledge of the Prophet Mohammed's (PBUH) life and their recitation skills were weak. In Arabic, students had good listening skills. They could read familiar topics but their writing skills were unsatisfactory. In Arabic as an additional language, speaking and listening skills were below expectations and writing skills were weak. In English, children started in the Kindergarten with few skills. By the end of the primary school, they had developed a broad range of age-appropriate vocabulary. In high school, their writing held interest and had strong sentence construction. In mathematics, students in Kindergarten and primary school had appropriate attainment in counting and calculating. A majority of students in the middle and high schools attained to a good level in algebra and geometry. Calculus was stronger in the high school. Attainment in practical and problem solving activities was weaker. In science, while students' knowledge beyond the Kindergarten was at least satisfactory, their investigative skills were weak.

Progress in Islamic Education was minimal and only a minority could identify what they had learned. In Arabic, they made steady progress in listening, speaking and reading but progress was slower in writing. In Arabic as additional language, although a few students made acceptable progress in learning new vocabulary, students made much less progress in other aspects. In English, progress was rapid in the high school where students took IGCSE examinations a year early. In mathematics, most students made good progress in learning mathematical techniques but slow progress in applying concepts in new situations. In science, students made good gains in knowledge but too few opportunities to practise problem solving and investigations slowed critical thinking and overall progress. Students with special educational needs made unsatisfactory progress.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

There were 281 Emirati students in the school in the time of the inspection. Their attainment and progress were acceptable in all key subjects, except Islamic Education where it was unsatisfactory. These judgments were at least in line with the rest of the students in the school. Students' attitudes and behaviour were good. They were mature and sensible in lessons and during break times. A majority of older students were developing self-reliance. The curriculum had a rational basis but it did not always meet their academic needs. Too little time was timetabled for Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language particularly in the high school. It did not meet the MOE requirements. Parents received reports and extra work for their children to do at home if they fell behind.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Good behaviour was generally evident in junior phases. It was outstanding at high school. Older students had a strong sense of personal responsibility, took the initiative and organised themselves well. Relationships were almost always caring and friendly. Older students often helped younger ones and were good role models. Across the school students were polite and respectful. They had a good understanding of healthy living but a few found less healthy food hard to resist. Punctuality was good and attendance was outstanding. Most students had a basic knowledge of Islam's values and its importance in Dubai society. They were less certain about the influence of Islam on everyday life. Students knew about the heritage of Dubai and could describe a few sporting and cultural events. Older students could talk about the positive and negative aspects of Dubai's multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. The majority of students could describe their own cultures but had limited knowledge of others. In the Kindergarten and the primary school, students' understanding of Islam and of the traditions of the UAE was weak. Students had a clear understanding of their responsibility as members of the school. They eagerly carried these out through the student life organisation. Older students had good attitudes to school work. Older students' understanding of Dubai's environmental issues such as conserving water and minimising pollution was reasonable but younger students' grasp was limited.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten and the primary school and acceptable in the middle and high schools. In most curriculum areas, teachers knew their subjects well and had positive relationships with their students. The school's priority was examination success. Teachers planned knowledge acquisition for students to pass with little attention given to the learning process and to developing skills. Teachers knew how well students had performed in tests and how to improve their scores. High school teachers, and most in the middle school, had a better understanding of most students' needs. However, in the Kindergarten and primary grades most teachers did not have a clear understanding of how younger students learn. Limited use was made of resources to engage students and deepen their understanding. Practical activities took the form of teacher demonstrations. Technology was not available in classrooms. A few skilled teachers probed students' understanding by asking challenging questions but most asked simple questions to aid factual recall. They rarely challenged students to think deeply about what they had learned in order to extend their learning. Consequently, younger students frequently lost interest and became passive.

Learning was unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten and primary school and acceptable in the middle and high schools. Most students were keen to learn. They could listen well and most followed instructions.

They knew how well they had done in their tests but didn't always know how to improve their scores. In most lessons in the Kindergarten and lower primary, learning was limited to repeat chanting. In the high school, students had a few more opportunities to be independent learners and to share their ideas. This was uncommon in other phases. Tasks rarely required students to persevere when solving a problem. In a few high school lessons, students were challenged to think critically. This was underdeveloped in the other phases and most students did not see the relevance of what they learned. Students rarely had opportunities to carry out research or investigations.

Assessment was acceptable in Kindergarten and good in other phases. The school had a rigorous system of data collection, which included internal school tests and external examinations. Students' progress was accurately analysed, week-by-week, and was used to determine which students had not mastered key points and needed extra support. The results were shared with the teachers and students. Parents had access to the data through the school website as well as summaries in termly reports. Teachers had a good knowledge of individual strengths and weaknesses. However, assessment did not impact sufficiently on planning so that more able students were not consistently challenged. Assessment strategies during lessons were limited and teachers' questioning was not often targeted to gauge individual student understanding. Children in Kindergarten and in Islamic Education and Arabic did not receive sufficient feedback to help them improve and were not involved in evaluating what they could do. There were some strong examples of peer assessment in English in the middle and high school phases.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was unsatisfactory in Kindergarten and acceptable in other phases. Its rationale and aims were clear, but in the lower phases in particular, active learning from 'doing' rather than from listening was minimal. There was limited development of skills of independence, application and critical thinking. Breadth was restricted. There was no science in Kindergarten, nor information technology until Grade 6; or art beyond Grade 8. Physical Education was not available after Grade 10. Sound transitional arrangements ensured that most students were well prepared for the next stage of their education. The curriculum was regularly reviewed but despite repeated recommendations in previous inspection reports, statutory requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic were not met. Students helped each other academically and socially through the distinctive and developing student life organisation programme. They could choose from a range of aesthetic, sporting, scientific, and academic extra-curricular activities. They had few visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Across the school there were good procedures for promoting students' health and safety. With student help, staff ensured that students moved around the school in an orderly fashion. There was a good level of supervision at key points in the day. Traffic management was efficient but some students did not always wear seatbelts on buses. Despite staff efforts, parents sometimes parked inconsiderately. School premises were kept very clean and the grounds were tidy and generally free of litter. Some concrete pillars in student play areas were not padded, posing a risk of injury. Building evacuation drills were regularly practised. Staff kept medicines secure and administered them carefully. The school promoted healthy lifestyles, although some high-fat, high-sugar food was on sale at the canteen. Procedures for child protection were good.

Staff and students enjoyed good relationships and student behaviour was well managed. There were effective systems to promote outstanding attendance and good punctuality. The Director was keen to improve the latter. There were comprehensive systems for monitoring and supporting students' well-being and personal development. Advice classes, access to the school's counselor, and trusted staff ensured that students were well cared for. Students received careers advice including timely support for their university applications.

[View judgements](#)

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

There were important weaknesses in the support for students with special educational needs. The school did not admit students who it decided would not be able to cope with its programmes. It acknowledged that some students progressed more slowly than others and they were given extra work. It did not have any arrangements to identify if there were underlying factors which slowed learning and progress. It simply asserted that there were no students with special educational needs in the school.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The new Senior Leadership Team had made changes but had not been in post long enough to have more impact. Leaders had a clear view of the school's direction and of its philosophy. This was transmitted to staff via initial training, guidance and monitoring. The wider direction of the school's development lay beyond the school leaders' brief. Delegation was a strong feature of the school's organisation and leaders at all levels knew what was expected of them.

Self-evaluation and school improvement planning were unsatisfactory. As a result of its self-review and improvement planning, the school could point to some improvement since the previous report such as changes to buildings and assessment. However, the school made insufficient use of national inspection criteria. As a result, the school presented a very different view of its effectiveness compared to the inspection findings. The school had paid little regard to previous inspection report's recommendations. Senior leaders and administrators were involved in the self-evaluation process but few staff beyond this.

Partnerships with parents and the community were unsatisfactory. The school provided parents with reports on students' progress, school information and responded to individual concerns. It did not look for involvement beyond this. The six Academic Quality Controllers met parents to discuss students' progress on the basis of test results and teacher reports. Older students' parents were offered a workshop on university entrance. Links with the local community, beyond those with other SABIS schools were limited.

Governance was unsatisfactory. The governance function lay in the hands of the SABIS Regional Director and SABIS senior leaders who held the school to account for its performance. The Regional Director directed the senior leadership during the inspection. Governance lacked any representation from other stakeholders and so was not accountable to them. Although governance responded to individual parental concerns, it did not systematically take their views into account. Governors had not ensured that the school responded to the recommendations in previous inspection reports.

Management including staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The school functioned well on a daily basis and students played a large part in helping it run smoothly. Teaching time and quality were restricted by the time devoted to assessment. There was sufficient appropriately deployed teaching staff. All teachers had degrees but almost all lacked a teaching qualification. Facilities were adequate for the large number of students but space was limited in some larger classes. Resources were acceptable. There had been some improvements to the book stocks and Information Technology. However, the Kindergarten, library and information and communication technology equipment were insufficient to meet the demands of a broad curriculum.

[View judgements](#)

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	273	12%
	Last year	174	8%
Teachers	5		3%
Students	20		3%

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

An increased number of parents responded to this year's survey. Parents were positive about the quality of teaching and learning at the school and the progress their children made in English, mathematics and science. They were happy with the degree of care their children received at school. However, the majority of parents thought that their children had insufficient involvement in community projects. Parents' views suggested that the school did not encourage them to be active partners in their children's learning. They did not feel involved in any decision making, nor did they feel that senior leaders listened to their views. Although parents received reports on their children's progress, they found their meetings with quality control advisers insufficiently helpful. Very few teachers and students responded to the survey.

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

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