

INSPECTION REPORT

The Indian High School-Branch

Report published in February 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The Indian High School-Branch

Location	Al Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Website	www.indianhighschooldubai.org
Telephone	04-2823555
Address	P O Box 106 Al Garhoud, Dubai
Principal	Gita Pabreja
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-9 / Kindergarten to Grade 4
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	4,184
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	Sunday 30th October 2011 to Thursday 3rd November 2011

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The context of the school

The Indian High School – Branch is located in Al Garhoud. It is a private school that provides education for girls and boys from Kindergarten to Grade 4, ages three to nine years.

At the time of the inspection, there were 4,184 students on roll. The school follows the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum and has begun to deliver the new CBSE-International curriculum.

There were no Emirati students enrolled in the school. The Principal had been in post for four months.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The overall performance of The Indian High School – Branch was good. There were several outstanding features. Students' attitudes to their learning and a much improved Kindergarten section were key strengths of the school. New leaders had succeeded in implementing important changes in a very short time. Attainment in English, mathematics and science was at least good across the school, and was outstanding in Kindergarten. The quality of the curriculum had also developed significantly.

Almost all students had excellent understanding of local cultures, and the influence of Islam in their lives, and had developed a real sense of responsibility for their own learning. While assessment was good in Kindergarten, it was acceptable in primary because effective strategies that addressed how students of a wide range of abilities learn were succeeding in lessons. Support for students with special educational needs was outstanding in the Learning Support Centre. However, in classrooms, there was greater variability in the success teachers had in meeting these students' needs. The school knew itself well and had good self-evaluation processes in place. There was a need to ensure that the impact of all improvement actions were clear and measurable. Relationships with parents and the community were outstanding. Governance was supportive and accessible; it held the school to account and challenged the staff appropriately. There was an excellent capacity in the school to improve further.

Key strengths

- There were outstanding learning outcomes for almost all children in Kindergarten;
- Almost all students displayed excellent personal and social development;
- The Kindergarten curriculum was outstanding;
- The Principal and academic supervisor were highly effective and had led rapid improvement in many aspects of the school's work;
- Very effective relationships with parents were supported by informed, accessible and innovative governance.

Recommendations

- Further develop students' core skills in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Continue to raise the quality of teaching and learning through the use of more effective assessment strategies, especially to support students with special educational needs;
- Increase the effectiveness of middle management in raising attainment and progress in primary;
- Ensure that the impact of self-evaluation processes are clearly identified and accurately measured.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary
Islamic Education		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good
Arabic as a first language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
English		
Attainment	Outstanding	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good
Mathematics		
Attainment	Outstanding	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good
Science		
Attainment	Outstanding	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good

In Kindergarten, attainment for almost all students was outstanding. Almost all children were able to use their knowledge and understanding in a variety of unfamiliar contexts. Their use of language improved rapidly from entry and they learned to use sophisticated terminology and vocabulary as they applied strong understanding in very active learning experiences. Most children performed well above expectations in English, mathematics and science. Attainment across the key subjects was variable in

primary, ranging between good and acceptable. In Islamic Education, the majority of students had excellent knowledge but their recitation and memorisation skills were limited. Their capacity to apply their understanding was acceptable. In Arabic, the students' speaking, reading and writing skills were underdeveloped. Students' writing skills in English, while good, did not display independent or imaginative elements. In mathematics and science, most students could use their knowledge and understanding well but were not discovering alternative solutions or hypotheses independently.

In Kindergarten, almost all students made significant progress in language acquisition, number and shape understanding and developing a capacity to use scientific skills quickly and accurately. They were well above expectations in their ability to apply this understanding in unfamiliar contexts, using their language skills in particular to demonstrate learning gains made in all aspects of their experiences. Primary students made good progress in general but were more reluctant to think critically or independently when challenged to do so. Their understanding was well developed in a majority of subjects but the application of scientific or mathematical skills was limited. Students' progress in Islamic Education was good while, in Arabic, the majority of students were not making good progress in the use of key language skills. There was a dependency on the teacher to repeat text, and most concepts were not developed to a good level. Most students with special educational needs made good progress. In the Learning Centre, they thrived on a rich integration of language and mathematical concepts and skills. In a majority of lessons in classrooms however, these students made less progress.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Outstanding	Outstanding
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Students' personal and social development was outstanding in both Kindergarten and primary. Relationships across the school were extremely positive and based on high levels of mutual respect. Behaviour was good in corridors, lessons and particularly in assemblies which students often organised and led with little help from adults. Students routinely took responsibility as class monitors or as members of the student council. Occasionally, in primary classes, particularly in the boys' section, students became restless. Attendance was consistently good across all grades. A particular strength of the students' social development was in their understanding and choice of healthy lifestyles, which was seen in many aspects of the school's work. For example, Kindergarten children were asked to reflect on whether or not they made healthy food choices as part of an art lesson. Many students took advantage of the healthy canteen options available to them. Students' knowledge of Islam and appreciation of local traditions were outstanding in both primary and Kindergarten. Primary students were readily able to discuss the daily practices of Muslims and demonstrated respect for Islam. Most students had very good knowledge of the traditions and cultural heritage of the Emirates. They expressed a sense of pride about belonging to the multi-cultural society of Dubai. Economic and environmental understanding was outstanding in both Kindergarten and primary. The history and development of Dubai were woven into many areas of the curriculum and students displayed this understanding consistently. Grade 3 social studies students learned about how Dubai's buildings have changed and how this reflected its economic development. Understanding of environmental issues, such as the importance of the conservation of water, was strong. Students were keen to be proactive their learning in these areas.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Good
Assessment	Good	Acceptable

The quality of teaching throughout the school was good. About two in every three lessons seen were judged to be good or better. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and planned well; however, not all teachers made adequate provision for those with special education needs. In good lessons, teachers used the time effectively to ensure students made gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding that were appropriate to their capabilities. They provided good opportunities for students to think and act for themselves, to carry out tasks together and to develop a sense of achievement from what they had accomplished. They also made skillful use of the interactive whiteboards ensuring that students too were involved. However, in a few lessons, the teaching was unsatisfactory. This was mostly because the teachers talked too much and gave insufficient opportunities for students to think and to ask questions. Teachers used the interactive whiteboards only to display slides rather than interact with students. Their use of questions was simply to check what students had remembered and was not used to probe and extend students' thinking. Praise was often given indiscriminately without explanation of why the answer given was good or incorrect. Students progressed less than they should have done in such lessons.

The quality of learning in Kindergarten was outstanding and was good across the primary phase. Kindergarten children were eager to learn and quickly took responsibility for their learning; they were able to concentrate for longer than might be expected for their age. They shared resources and toys, and followed the rules of games with understanding and enjoyment. Primary students worked well together and shared ideas and opinions when completing tasks set by the teacher. Almost all students, including those with special education needs, were willing participants in the question and answer sessions and generally responded with confidence and competence. Some subjects provided good opportunities for students to learn independently of the teacher; for example, working together to solve problems, carry out experiments in science or learn from posters. However, they had too few opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to help them research or to enhance their learning.

Assessment in Kindergarten was good and acceptable in primary. The school had a comprehensive assessment policy with clearly defined procedures and objectives. However, evidence of effective implementation and use of assessment information was inconsistent in primary. Accurate and consistent identification of students' needs through assessment was limited. Assessment data rarely formed the basis of improved lesson planning. Marking of notebooks in Kindergarten was regular, rigorous and diagnostic. In primary, the quality of marking of students' work and the provision for feedback often did not enable students to learn how to improve. The majority of the teachers were well aware of their students' strengths and weaknesses but did not effectively use assessment data to plan to meet the needs of all learners. Students' understanding of lessons was usually assessed effectively by teachers through questioning.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Good

The curriculum was outstanding in Kindergarten and good in primary. There was a clear rationale linked to the vision of developing global leaders. It was well defined with focused objectives. There was a good balance between academic and non-academic aspects, and there was ample choice for students. A curriculum review department had been created. Review was ongoing and had had greater impact in Kindergarten than in primary, in part because teachers did not provide enough opportunities to promote higher-order thinking skills. The Islamic Education and Arabic curricula had not been reviewed to the same extent as the other subjects. The school prepared the transitions between classes by communicating students' outcomes effectively to establish clear starting points. Teachers' planning had an increasing emphasis on skills development, especially in Kindergarten. Activities had cross-curricular links in Kindergarten that allowed the children to use their skills in unfamiliar contexts. Learning experiences were designed to consolidate understanding in science, performing arts laboratories and the playground. The curriculum was enriched with a host of interesting activities, as well as local and international field trips. The enrichment classes for Islamic Education were poorly attended. The range of extra-curricular activities was extensive. The school had well-developed links with the community. The school did not make the most of its website to support curriculum priorities.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good

The health and safety of students was outstanding in Kindergarten and primary. All sections of the school were well-monitored and excellent procedures were in place to ensure that the students were safe and secure at all times. The transport of students on a large fleet of well-maintained buses was very well-managed. The school premises, surroundings, equipment and resources were maintained to a very high standard and were very well suited to the needs of the students. High-quality informative records relating to safety issues were kept and they indicated what actions were taken. A number of improvements had been made since the last inspection including the provision of new buses, and the appointment of a number of female student monitors on these buses. Other improvements included the development of a health track, the inauguration of interactive question and answer sessions between students and teachers on health issues, the provision of reception areas at all entrances to the school and storage lockers for students' books and bags.

The quality of support for students was good across the school. Staff-student relationships were positive. Staff members were clear regarding the approaches to behavioural management and were very effective. Students had ready access to counsellors and were supported very well by the medical staff. Accurate records were maintained of attendance and punctuality. A detailed and effective policy was in place and implemented to raise the rate of attendance, overall. Provision for students with special education needs was outstanding in the Learning Centre. The school had a specialist team to assist these students. This provision was not matched in the classrooms. Too many teachers did not take into account the range of abilities in their classroom and provide sharply focused enough support.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

Leadership was good overall. The Principal and the Academic Supervisor were outstanding in their leadership of change that had been highly successful in many areas in a short time. An impressively distributed leadership model was in place and was dedicated to high standards. This was evidenced in almost all sections of the leaders in the school by very strong commitment, willingness to change and support for students. The impact of this work was visible in Kindergarten, relationships with parents, a new focus on active learning and the excellent management of facilities. In a minority of sections in the school, there was a limited awareness of the kind of impact intended by leaders' actions. Not all outcomes of the school's work were clearly identified and so could not be accurately evaluated.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. A detailed self-evaluation statement identified many judgements that were in line with those of the inspectors. The school knew itself well. The statements in the document were variable, however, as they did not always highlight the links to students' outcomes. Therefore, it was not always clear what impact was being targeted. The outcomes for different groups of students were sometimes less clear and there was not enough expectation from a few areas in the school. The school had responded well to the recommendations from the previous report and an excellent training programme was in place for all staff. A key feature was the successful management of the change to a more active learning experience for the students.

Relationships with parents and the local community were outstanding. Parents used the new Parent Communication Centre purposefully and demonstrated high levels of understanding of the new direction of the school that was focused on active and independent learning. Parental communication was highly effective with easy accessibility to teachers and leaders. Parents were involved in many aspects of daily school life and supported their children's learning well. Several focus groups and class representatives ensured that all parental concerns and hopes were communicated appropriately. The school had very

effective links with the community that developed key learning and life skills aligned to the school's vision.

Governance was outstanding. It was supportive, informed and accessible to teachers and parents. Governors displayed very high interest in the work of the school and understood the need for continuous improvement. ICT, SMS messaging and focus groups were used effectively to listen to the views of parents and decisions were made with student welfare as the key priority at all times. External support for teachers through university links, training and best use of available resources was actioned in a focused and productive manner. Leaders were held to account and governors ensured there was an excellent balance between acknowledgement of the quality of work being done and the ongoing requirement of improvement.

Staffing, facilities and resources were outstanding. Extra staffing was being put in place for Kindergarten and students with special educational needs and excellent training programmes were in place. The operation of the whole school was very impressive. Almost all staff had appropriate skills to ensure that the students' overall progress was managed effectively. The school managed its facilities extremely well. All spaces had been reviewed to develop more teacher, parent and student interactions. ICT had been used well in this regard. All facilities were of a high order and there was a continuous investment being made in upgrading where this was needed.

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	1580	42%
	Last year	2542	80%
Teachers	163		58%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

Almost half of the parents responded to the questionnaire, down from most parents last year. Most parents were supportive of the work of the school. They believed that their children's progress was good in the key subjects, but less so in Arabic. A few parents expressed concern about their children's progress in Arabic as an additional language. While most parents were satisfied with the range of subjects, clubs and activities provided, a few parents believed that they were too limited. Teachers were very positive in their opinions of the school and its students. Most teachers expressed satisfaction with the school.

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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