

INSPECTION REPORT

Deira Private School

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Deira Private School

Location	Al Twar 3
Type of school	Private
Website	www.deps-sch.ae
Telephone	04 2641595
Address	P O Box 231959, Dubai
Principal	Sharyn Ann Grieve
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-11 / Foundation Stage to Year 6
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	111
Number of Emirati students	45 (41%)
Date of the inspection	Sunday 11th to Monday 12th December 2011

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The context of the school

Located in Al Twar 3, Deira Private School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to primary, aged four to 11 years. The school follows the English National Curriculum, using the framework of the Cambridge International Primary Programme.

At the time of the inspection, there were 111 students on roll from a variety of nationalities. About 40 per cent were Emirati. Students were grouped into 12 classes, with four classes in the Foundation Stage and eight in primary.

There were 22 full-time teachers including the Principal. The teachers in the school had a range of academic and teaching qualifications and most were suitably qualified for the subjects and age group that they were teaching. They were supported by seven teaching assistants. The Principal was in her third year of office and had been instrumental in establishing the school in 2009.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Deira Private School provided a good quality of education for its students. It was a school which had made considerable improvement in many areas since the last inspection. These improvements included attainment and progress in science in Foundation Stage, progress in English, mathematics and Arabic for additional language learners, as well as the development of students' civic, economic and environmental understanding. The quality of teaching had improved in some, but not all, areas of the school; however, the targeted programme of staff training had focused on areas that were requiring further development. The ethos of the school was positive and was supported by a good curriculum, quality of support for the students and the satisfaction and loyalty of parents.

Since the previous inspection, a number of strategies had been introduced to improve the curriculum, specifically in supporting students with special educational needs and for students who learn Arabic as an additional language. Despite the obvious success of the latter, the school did not meet the Ministry of Education requirements of curricular time for Arabic for first language learners. The school had made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous report, and so had good capacity to improve further.

Key strengths

- Good progress in most key subjects because of improved teaching;
- The good attitudes and behaviour of students throughout the school founded on positive relationships between staff and students;
- Comprehensive assessment which was well used to modify the curriculum and support teaching and learning;
- Excellent arrangements to ensure students' health and safety in the school;
- Strategic vision and direction of the leaders of the school and the effective response by the leadership team in addressing the recommendations from the last inspection report.

Recommendations

- Make teaching and learning more consistently good with a focus on the learner rather than the teacher;
- Make more regular and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool to facilitate students' learning;
- Further develop the roles and function of governors to drive and support whole school improvement processes;
- Ensure that curriculum time for Arabic as a first language meets the time requirements of the Ministry of Education.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Islamic Education		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good
English		
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good
Mathematics		
Attainment	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Science		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good

Attainment was acceptable in most subjects. It was good in science and primary mathematics. In Islamic Education, most students were able to attain levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in

line with curriculum standards. In Arabic, students displayed strong listening skills and initial reading skills, although their writing skills were less well developed. In English, most students had age-appropriate skills in reading and writing; their speaking and listening skills, however, were good. In Foundation Stage, a minority of children could read common sight words and their emergent writing was developing steadily. By the end of primary, the majority of students were reading with fluency and expression. A minority of students were writing with confidence, composing sentences with connectives and writing short poems paying attention to techniques, such as rhyme and rhythm. In mathematics, the majority of Foundation Stage children were able to match quantities, numbers and names of numbers correctly. As measured against curriculum expectations, the majority of primary students attained levels above international standards. In science, attainment was good in both phases of the school, except in Year 5.

Progress of students was good in most subjects with the exception of Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language, where it was acceptable, especially in terms of skills development. Progress in writing in Arabic was less well developed than other aspects of the language. All students, including those learning English as an additional language, made good progress in English from their starting points and over time. The majority of children in the Foundation Stage and primary years made good progress in mathematics in relation to their starting points. Progress in mathematics and science lessons was usually good but was at times hindered by teachers' inefficient use of time. Students with special educational needs made broadly acceptable progress across most key subjects.

The attainment and progress of Emirati students were mostly the same as those of other students in most subjects. There were some differences. In Arabic, Emirati students made acceptable progress overall, with weaknesses in writing, notably with regard to the limited breadth of vocabulary. In English, most students' writing lacked fluency, and spelling was sometimes inaccurate. However, attainment and progress in mathematics were good for Emirati students. The students were well integrated; in the better lessons, individual language needs were mostly well met through effective differentiation and support. Emirati students who began school in the Foundation Stage had little proficiency in English, but they made good progress in learning it.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good. Relationships between students and teachers were positive and supportive. Student responsibility was encouraged and members of the recently formed school council took their roles seriously. Most students made healthy eating choices and displayed an awareness of healthy life-styles. Attendance and punctuality were acceptable. Most students had a good knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Islam, and almost all students had a good awareness of the benefits of living in the multi-cultural society of Dubai. They respected the local traditions and culture, and the relationships between different nationalities in Dubai. Their civic and economic awareness was mostly good and their involvement in community issues and projects had increased since the last inspection. Students contributed to the community through various charity and fund-raising projects, as well as through activities in collaboration with organisations such as the Emirates Environmental Group. Almost all students took good care of the school environment and most were able to share ideas about how to improve this, as well as how to sustain the local environment and its resources.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Good	Good

The quality of teaching was good overall, and slightly stronger in the Foundation Stage. Almost all teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and knew how students learned. Lesson planning was consistently good and met the needs of different students well. Teachers' skills in time management were good, but a few dominated lessons by talking for too long and so lost the attention of their students. The majority of teachers provided their students with a good balance of dialogue and activities. Various resources were effectively used by teachers but, in primary science classes, they were limited. The use of information and communications technology (ICT) was common, but only a few teachers fully exploited the power of interactive whiteboards. Teachers' rapport with students was always positive, and their skills in questioning students had improved since the previous inspection. A majority of teachers were asking questions in ways that required thinking rather than the recall of facts. Different teaching strategies met the needs of students almost all of the time.

In other subjects and activities, the quality of teaching was good. Teaching was observed in music, drama, cooking, ICT, French and physical education.

The quality of learning was acceptable across the school. In a significant minority of lessons, learning was good. Students generally knew their strengths and weaknesses and how to improve. Children in the Foundation Stage were eager learners but their activities at times lacked independence. Likewise, primary students were enthusiastic and responsible learners, but they had too few opportunities to learn independently. Primary students could explain their learning to others clearly; this skill was less developed amongst children in the Foundation Stage. Students' interactions were respectful and appropriate at almost all times and they co-operated well. The application of learning to the real world was a part of learning in most subjects. Connections between areas of learning were observed but not part of an overall plan for integration. Students' enquiry and critical thinking skills were being developed in only a few lessons.

The quality of assessment was good in both phases. Every student had comprehensive assessment portfolios that were based upon a range of tasks over time and linked to curriculum expectations. Teachers knew their students' strengths and weaknesses very well. Teachers provided on-going assessment diligently in most lessons and students were given support accordingly. Students assessed their own work and that of their peers. Support for students having difficulty or with special educational needs was provided as a result of assessment information. The use of assessment data had a clear influence upon curriculum, planning and teaching.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good

The curriculum was of good quality, an improvement since the previous inspection. Students were provided with a broad and balanced range of learning and developmental experiences from the Foundation Stage to Year 6, based upon Cambridge International Primary Standards. This included opportunities to study Islamic Education and Arabic in the Foundation Stage. The main subjects were complemented by subjects that included physical education, music, art and citizenship. Progression was well planned between year groups and for the transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1. School leaders had reviewed the curriculum and made significant improvements, especially in Islamic Education, Arabic as an additional language and in knowledge and understanding of the world in the Foundation Stage. Weekly provision of Arabic as a first language fell 40 minutes short of the Ministry of Education regulation in Years 1 to 3. Some modifications were made to accommodate the needs of second language learners and those with special educational needs in key subjects. Cross-curricular links were made to field trips and during some lessons but were not centrally planned. Independent research opportunities were limited. Enrichment was planned in lessons and outside of classrooms to extend challenge to all students. Extra-curricular activities of high quality and were offered every Monday and on special occasions.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good

The school's arrangements for health and safety were outstanding. The school was a safe place for students; they were very well cared for and protected. The school was mindful of the need for vigilance at the start and end of the school day, both in terms of organised transport, and the delivery and collection by parents of individual children. The school had a good range of fire and safety equipment available throughout the building. Regular fire drills were carried out and records kept; students and teachers were very aware of the procedures involved. Staff made students responsive to the importance and advantages of living a healthy life-style and of taking regular exercise, for example in organised sports. Child protection arrangements were now robust and procedures to follow were fully understood by all staff.

The quality of support for students was good. Staff knew their students well and had developed positive relationships with them. Students felt that they were treated fairly. There were well-understood and effective arrangements for dealing with any incidents of negative behaviour and for promoting positive attitudes which most staff followed. The school also provided good support to those students who were preparing to move on to the next phase of their education. Identification of students with special educational needs was now firmly established and there were good systems in place for monitoring; however, provision for students in the focused withdrawal lessons was yet to be fully developed and built upon in their normal lessons to secure more rapid progress. The school monitored attendance and punctuality with absences followed up, reasons recorded, and parents contacted, if school attendance was of concern.

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

The quality of leadership was good. The school leadership team was well structured and delegated. It was cohesive and provided a clear direction for all members of staff. Leaders had clear roles and responsibilities, and were very supportive of all their colleagues. The appointment of additional key personnel to the management team had started to make improvements in science and mathematics, Arabic and in the care and welfare of students. Professional development for members of staff was a key priority and, for this reason, there was an extensive programme of monitoring their work in support of the school's drive to create an environment which promoted learning and responsibility for all. The school displayed a good capacity to improve further.

The school's self-evaluation was good. Senior leaders certainly knew the school's strengths and weaknesses. Consultation with the governing body had helped establish thoughtful and appropriate priorities to assist the school to improve, and rightly had linked teachers' professional development closely with them. Such consultation was yet to involve the parental body in a more formal way. Improvement plans were extensive and touched on most aspects of the working of the school. However, such plans lacked clearly defined success criteria to highlight the most important aspects. The school had responded very well to four of the recommendations from the last report; they had yet to ensuring that teaching was consistently good across all subjects and all years in the school.

The school's partnership with parents was good. The school had initiated positive steps with parental involvement which had contributed towards student learning throughout the school. Many parents gave freely of their time on a regular basis to help at school with a range of activities, such as working on seating for the library, supporting school activities and accompanying educational visits. Parents felt that they were very well informed about the school's activities and what their children learned; they also felt that a better website would improve communication even further. Reports about students' academic

progress were detailed and informative, and gave helpful comparisons about expected levels of progress, in addition to next steps for learning. Local community links had enhanced the experiences of students by broadening their perspectives on Dubai's society; however, links with other schools were yet to be more fully developed.

Governance of the school was acceptable. Governors had a clear strategic overview of the school, were in regular contact and often visited it to see how it operated. Collectively, the governors brought considerable expertise to support much of the school's operation; they shared the vision of the school and took a keen interest in achieving it. For example, they were involved in the appointment of teachers, in school development planning and helped ensure the school provided a good service and a 'listening ear' to parents. However, they did not hold the school sufficiently accountable for academic achievement.

The management of the school was good. The school ran very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. It maintained its good environment for learning with classrooms that were spacious and mostly well equipped. Specialist teaching rooms included a cookery room, an ICT suite and a library in which fiction and non-fiction texts had been updated since the last inspection. The science laboratory was now better equipped but was not used extensively enough to support the development of scientific enquiry skills. The sports hall and outside areas provided good scope for sports for all students; the school had yet to fully decide on the best way to develop students' skills in swimming. The teaching staff shared considerable expertise, boosted by some wise staff appointments for Arabic and Islamic Education, care and support of students and the development of ICT skills for the students.

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	50	60%
	Last year	38	70%
Teachers	22		100%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

A majority of parents responded to the survey, but at a lower rate than last year. All teachers responded to their survey. Parents had an extremely positive view of the school. They reported that their children were safe and that the Principal and her staff provided good personal support and care. Concerns were few. Almost all parents were completely satisfied with the education provided by the school for their children. Teachers from each section of the school completed the survey. Of these, almost all had a very positive view of the school and highlighted strengths such as the family atmosphere, positive and supportive working environment, the quality of the teaching, leadership and the opportunities to develop professionally.

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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