

INSPECTION REPORT

The Private Religious Institute

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The Private Religious Institute

Location	Al Satwa
Type of school	Private
Website	www.rid.ae
Telephone	04 3495095
Address	PO Box 74544, Al Wasl, Dubai
Principal	Prof. Ahmed Mohammad Noor Saif Al Mohairy
Curriculum	MoE
Gender of students	Boys
Age / Grades or Year Groups	11-18 / Grade 6 to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	88
Number of Emirati students	88 (100%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 20th to Tuesday 21st February 2012

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The context of the school

The Private Religious Institute is situated in Al Satwa. The school had a total enrollment of 88 students, all Emiratis, aged 11 to 18 years. It followed the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum and students undertook the relevant examinations. There was supplementary provision for Islamic Education and Arabic.

There were 18 full-time teachers, the Principal, Vice-Principal and administration team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. Students were grouped in nine classes.

The school was located in two separate buildings, each building accommodating a separate phase. The Cycle 2 building was larger with outdoor activity space. Most students and teachers found it necessary to travel between the two school sites during the school day, for example to science lessons or the daily assembly.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The Private Religious Institute provided an acceptable quality of education. Good leadership had ensured that the school had made mostly good progress on the previous inspection's recommendations, making improvements in a number of important areas.

In both cycles, students' attainment and progress in English had improved. Their attainment and progress in Islamic Education, Arabic, mathematics and science were good throughout the school. Students' personal and social development was good with significant improvements in their civic, economic and environmental understanding. Teaching, learning and assessment were acceptable, although there had been considerable effort to improve teaching strategies that had yet to make a broader impact on students' outcomes. Whilst providing students with an enhanced educational experience in Islamic Education and Arabic, the overall curriculum was acceptable. Student support was good throughout the school, with health and safety acceptable. Leadership was good and ensured that the school had a good capacity for further improvement. There was a strong commitment to collaborative leadership, and self-evaluation was an improving aspect of the school's work. Governance was good and included parent and teacher representation.

Key strengths

- The positive student staff relationships;
- The improving quality of students' civic, economic and environmental understanding;
- The enriched curriculum in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- The good progress made in addressing the recommendations in the last inspection report.

Recommendations

- Further develop teaching strategies to meet the needs of all groups of students;
- Use assessment data more effectively to inform lesson planning, teaching and curriculum modification;
- Develop students' enquiry skills and their independence in learning across the curriculum;
- Monitor and evaluate progress in the implementation of improvement plans and in the meeting of targets that have a positive impact on students' outcomes;
- Engage the parents in curriculum development activities enabling them to participate more fully in the students' learning.

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

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Islamic Education		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English		
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Science		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good

Attainment was good in most subjects. In Islamic Education Grade 9 students could recite the verses of The Holy Qur'an confidently. They could read and understand Hadeeth. Grade 12 students recited long verses of The Holy Qur'an using recitation rules and with good understanding. Students knew, understood and applied Fiqh laws, such as analogy. At Grade 12, students read paragraphs expressively with few errors. In English, speaking and listening skills were variable in Grade 6 but by the time they completed Cycle 2 they

were acceptable. On entry, the attainment for learners of English was variable across all four skills. Students had a good knowledge of mathematical concepts and strategies. They solved problems capably but lacked the independence of thought to generate their own solutions. Students had good subject knowledge in science and knew how to conduct experiments though their skills of investigation were underdeveloped.

A majority of students made good progress developing their understanding of Islamic concepts, Hadeeth and Qur'an recitation skills. In Arabic lessons, students were gaining good language skills, especially listening, speaking and reading. Almost all students' reading progress in English was limited because there were too few opportunities to read a broad range of texts. The school had started to introduce more opportunities to extend writing but this was still in the early stages of development. Students developed good calculation skills over time and solved problems efficiently, but they did not develop the skills to think enough for themselves. Students made good progress over time in scientific knowledge gained and in their application of this knowledge. However, they were not confident at carrying out their own investigations.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good

Most students displayed good behaviour around the school. Student-staff relationships were good and students showed great respect to their teachers. Most students had a well-developed understanding of the need to keep healthy and participated in developing better menu options in the canteen. Attendance was good and most of students attended the morning assembly each day. There was a need to develop students' independence across both cycles. Most students showed a good understanding of Islam and its positive impact in Dubai's society and in the world. In particular, they showed significant respect and understood the Emirati traditions and heritage of the UAE. However, in both cycles, students' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai was underdeveloped. Most students showed proactive responsibility through their monitoring of buses and the students council had participated in making

changes in the school. Students showed an excellent understanding of the Dubai economy. Almost all students in Cycle 3 understood the importance of using renewable energy as a future source. Students' participation in a wider range of community work, both inside and outside the school, was limited.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable in both cycles. Most teachers had a secure knowledge of their subjects. A majority of lessons across the school were adequately planned and had a good pace. The range of teaching strategies used did not always meet the needs of all students, in particular students with lower or higher ability levels. In both cycles there were many examples of good teacher-student interactions. This included the use of effective dialogue and open-ended questions in the better lessons. In a minority of lessons, teachers spoke excessively, including asking questions that promoted one-word answers. This limited the opportunities for students to develop their independent and analytical thinking. Most teachers did not vary their strategies sufficiently to meet the needs of all groups of students.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable overall. Most students showed very good attitudes and commitment to their learning. In the better lessons students were encouraged to participate actively and demonstrate their understanding. Student-teacher relationships were generally positive and this enhanced effective learning in the less didactic lessons. Almost all students demonstrated an eagerness to respond to questions and were able to work in groups when given the opportunity. Students' application of their learning to the real world was generally underdeveloped. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by students in class-based lessons was very limited.

The assessment of learning was acceptable throughout the school. Regular testing and thorough analysis provided good overall assessment data for each student and year group. The recording of assessment information was organised efficiently. Efforts were being made by teachers to compare this data with external international standards. Some analysis, such as the three-year analysis for the present Grade 12,

was undertaken to identify broad trends and individual progress. Tracking of students' progress was having a variable impact on learning outcomes. The quality of marking of students' work in books was not always current and did not provide sufficient clear guidance. In a minority of lessons the teachers monitored attainment and progress during lessons by circulating around classrooms, seeing students' work in progress and engaging students in dialogue. In a majority of lessons, there was no check at end of the section of work to determine if learning objectives had been met.

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

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was acceptable in Cycle 2 and Cycle 3. It was soundly planned and the English curriculum had been improved with a focus on speaking, listening and writing. This added to the overall curriculum's breadth and balance. Transition between the cycles was smooth and effectively ensured that the majority of students were well prepared for their next stage of learning. There was regular subject review and there had been improvements made to enrich Islamic Education, Arabic and English as an additional language with extra lessons for underachieving students. However, the quality of curriculum programmes for the less able and more able varied from subject to subject and this inconsistency compromised effective learning. Opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking were limited. The range of extra-curricular activities was acceptable.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Good	Good

The school provided an acceptable level of care for its students. Staff knew the students well and took an interest in their well-being; they were vigilant in their supervision of students around school. Teachers had recently received training about child protection as part of the school's commitment to protecting all students, especially the most vulnerable. The school was keen to promote healthy life-styles and had introduced improvements in the canteen and opportunities for sport. Its formal systems for safeguarding students were adequate. Both sites were safe for students but there were weaknesses, for example in the

lack of the fire escape signage and trailing electrical wires in classrooms. The school did not keep a record of who was on the two premises and access into the school required review to ensure security at all times.

The quality of support throughout the school was good. There were good relationships between students and teachers. Most teachers provided good care and guidance to students. The monitoring of behaviour was good. The school provided good career and higher education placement advice. Identification of students with special educational needs was good with the needs of less able and more able students being identified in the majority of subjects. Learning plans were not always shared with students and they varied in quality from subject to subject. There were effective monitoring systems in place to ensure good attendance and punctuality.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

The quality of leadership was good. The effective leadership qualities of the Principal and Vice-Principal promoted the strong commitment to collaborative leadership across the school. The shared sense of vision among the staff, governors and a majority of parents underpinned the commitment to continuous improvement. There had been improvements made in building the capacity of middle managers, enabling them to evaluate the impact of their subject departments on learning. The school promoted professional development opportunities to help managers be more effective in their roles. There was good communication among school leaders.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Effective self-evaluation processes had been introduced and supported detailed improvement planning. The monitoring and evaluation of progress in the implementation of improvement plans needed further development but were beginning to have a positive impact on students' outcomes, for example in raising standards in English. There had been good progress in addressing the recommendations of the last inspection report.

The quality of partnership with parents and the community was acceptable. There were strong links with the Parents Committee and the wider community which supported school events, celebrations and educational visits within Dubai. The school's 'open door' policy and the work of the Vice-Principal and the staff to engage with parents through regular meetings was a strength of the school. There had been improvements made to the quality of information provided to parents on their children's progress. Parental involvement in the improvement of the curriculum was limited.

The quality of governance was good. The governors' involvement in the self-evaluation process and improvement planning was clear. Sub-committees had been organised to focus on specific issues, for example special educational needs, child protection procedures and ensuring statutory requirements were fulfilled. There were better communication links with the parents and staff through the parent and staff representatives. Stakeholder representation was further enhanced by two members from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The school operations ran efficiently. Efficient timetabling and administration ensured good use of what space is available on both sites. Almost all staff and students knew and understood the daily routines. Sufficiently experienced and qualified teachers were deployed appropriately, almost all having been there for at least two years. There was a good level of non-educational support staff. The teaching areas were of acceptable size, allowing for small class sizes; however, the science laboratory was restrictive for older students. Learning resources were limited, including ICT.

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	41	49%
	Last year	45	44%
Teachers	17		89%
Students	23		59%

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

About half of the parents responded to the survey. Most agreed that their children were making good progress in all key subjects. Almost all highlighted their children's good understanding of Islam. Most parents and students agreed that there was a good range of clubs and activities at the school. Almost all parents agreed that their children were developing good environmental understanding whilst a majority of students believed that they took steps to improve the environment. Almost all parents and most of the students felt that teaching was good at the school and most parents agreed that they were effectively involved in the life of the school. All teachers agreed that there were good assessment systems in place, that the school supported their continuing professional development and that the students were treated fairly. A majority of students agreed that they chose a healthy lifestyle with the help of the school. Almost all parents and students and most teachers agreed that the school was well led.

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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