

INSPECTION REPORT

Kings' Dubai School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Kings' Dubai School

Location	Um Suqeim 3, Dubai
Type of school	Private
Website	www.kingsdubai.com
Telephone	04-3483939
Address	PO Box 38199, Um Suqeim 3, Dubai
Principal	Alison Wilkinson
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-11 / Foundation Stage to Year 6
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	448
Number of Emirati students	16 (4%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 31st October 2011 to Wednesday 2nd November 2011

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The context of the school

Kings' Dubai School is a private school located in Umm Suqeim. It provides education for boys and girls aged three to 11 years in the Foundation Stage and primary phase. The school follows the English National Curriculum. Students are assessed at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 using National Curriculum standard assessment tests.

At the time of the inspection, there were 448 students on roll and 31 teachers on staff. All the teachers had appropriate qualifications. There were 16 Emirati students, representing approximately four per cent of the school roll. The school had identified students with special educational needs. The majority of them were supported in lessons by class teachers and there was additional help in small groups for those at risk of falling behind in their learning. Data for the last academic session reported by the school indicated outstanding levels of attendance.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Outstanding

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Kings' School Dubai continued to provide an outstanding quality of education. The quality of leadership was outstanding. Excellent relationships between all staff and students contributed to its warm and purposeful ethos and the shared determination to ensure that all students did as well as they could. Students' outstanding progress across most subjects was the result of excellent teaching. Their high quality learning and personal development was underpinned by an innovative, engaging and relevant curriculum, although the Arabic curriculum was not as well developed as in other subjects. Students' exemplary behaviour, positive attitudes and conscientious approach had a significant impact on their learning and progress. Leaders at all levels shared a common sense of purpose and contributed to the continuous drive for improvement. They acknowledged that there were some weaknesses in the classroom support for students with additional learning needs. The excellent partnership with parents was evident in the welcome given to them by the school, the comprehensive feedback they received about their children's progress, and how the school helped them to support their children's learning.

The school had made significant progress in implementing the recommendations in the last report. In particular, a renewed emphasis on developing students' learning skills had been successful and had further raised levels of attainment.

Key strengths

- The outstanding progress and attainment of students in English, mathematics and science;
- Students' outstanding personal development, including their excellent behaviour and their grasp of economic and environmental issues;
- The high quality of students' learning, particularly their higher-order thinking skills, supported by outstanding teaching in most subjects;
- The well designed, innovative and engaging curriculum which contributed significantly to students' enjoyment of learning, academic progress and personal development;
- The outstanding leadership which sustained the school's strengths and planned for further development.

Recommendations

- Ensure that lesson objectives are more closely aligned with the curriculum in Arabic in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment;
- Improve procedures for the early identification of students with additional learning needs, for supporting their learning in the classroom across the curriculum and for tracking their progress more effectively.

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

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

Students' attainment in Islamic Education was good. Muslim students exhibited pride in Islam and were keen to participate and share ideas. Most were able to make good links between the concepts they were studying and their daily lives and modern lifestyles. Students had an appropriate knowledge of the messengers of Allah and of the Prophet's companions and important events during the early days of Islam. Attainment in Arabic was acceptable. Students' understood basic instructions and direct questions,

however, speaking skills for majority of students studying Arabic as a first language were underdeveloped as they were not able to answer direct questions using standard Arabic. Attainment in English, mathematics and science was outstanding across the school. Children were gaining a very secure grounding in all aspects of literacy and were particularly confident in speaking and recognising letters and their associated sounds. Their early numeracy skills were very secure and they were curious about the world around them. By Year 6, students could speak elegantly and write fluently and with flair. They successfully tackled challenging mathematical problems and were acquiring excellent skills in scientific enquiry.

Students' progress in Islamic Education and Arabic, both as a first and additional language, was good. They made good headway in memorising a number of short Surahs from The Holy Qur'an and were beginning to apply Tajweed rules in their reading and recitation. Progress in English, mathematics and science was outstanding. Students built up their knowledge of letters, numbers and shapes rapidly in the Foundation Stage and built quickly on these through the primary phase. Similarly, the outstanding progress they made in science was founded on the excellent start made in the early years.

School data and observations confirmed that Emirati students who had been at the school for over two years reached at least good standards in Arabic, English, mathematics and science, with the exception of those with additional learning needs. Students who had been in the school longer understandably made better progress than relative newcomers as their previous schooling had generally been at Arabic speaking schools. Their attainment in Islamic Education matched that of other students. Emirati students progressed at similar rates to other students in all subjects. Indeed, some made exceptional progress from their starting points through the primary phase.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	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' behaviour was exemplary. They had extremely positive attitudes to learning and were full of enthusiasm for all aspects of school life, as reflected in their high level of attendance. Students had an excellent understanding of the importance of diet and exercise in maintaining healthy lifestyle. Their secure knowledge about Islam, related rituals and important events, such as the Hajj during Eid el Adha, was clearly evident. For example, older students gave examples of common values found in other religions, such as honesty and alms-giving. While appreciating the diversity of cultures at their school and in Dubai, students maintained a strong sense of their own national identity. Students relished the opportunity to take responsibility and made significant contributions to helping the school run smoothly. For example, children in the Foundation Stage took pride in assuming roles of responsibility in their classrooms. Students in the primary years took advantage of the ample opportunities provided to assume roles of leadership in and out of school. Students' understanding of the reasons that underpinned Dubai's progress over the past few decades was strong. Recycling of a wide range of materials was an embedded practice across the school. Older students could discuss the impact of modern consumption of water to increased levels of pollution, indicating students' very good grasp of environmental issues.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

In almost all lessons, teachers had a secure knowledge of how students learned which led to students making good or better progress. Every classroom was an interesting and welcoming learning environment. These were also safe environments where students could think, reflect, make mistakes and grow. High quality lesson plans included clear objectives, expected learning outcomes and success criteria which were communicated effectively to secure progress in learning. In a few lessons however, activities were not always effectively planned to ensure all students made good progress. Time was managed well in almost all lessons, with plenaries used effectively to review and consolidate learning. Skilful use of targeted questions was instrumental in checking for understanding and challenging the more able. In almost all lessons, teachers were catalysts and facilitators of learning where students were expected to collaborate, support each other, and yet be independent thinkers and responsible learners.

Students collaborated extremely well, shared resources responsibly and often supported each other's learning. They were confident young individuals who knew when to celebrate achievements, evaluate the quality of their own and others' learning, and ask for support if need be. Good modelling by teachers enabled students to develop strong collaboration skills. As independent and responsible learners, students of all ages were confidently able to discuss their learning with visitors and each other. Through effective use of the abundant resources, students found out things for themselves and applied their learning to broader, real-life contexts.

Assessment had improved overall and was outstanding in both phases. Effective methods were in place to collect and record assessment data which were systematically and thoroughly analysed, across all subjects. Tracking and evaluating students' progress was therefore highly effective. Data were often further scrutinised to identify trends in attainment such as those related to gender, nationality or additional language acquisition. Ongoing assessment was embedded as an integral part of teaching and learning in almost all lessons. Teachers monitored students' progress and almost all gave constructive and useful oral

feedback to improve outcomes. Analysis of data was used well to identify and support students who were not making expected progress. Highly effective marking was used in almost all subjects to ensure students knew exactly how to improve their learning.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

The school's self-evaluation of the curriculum as outstanding was confirmed by the inspection. The school's aim to develop learning through thematic, creative and relevant contexts tailored to the students' interests provided a clear rationale for curriculum development. The annual curriculum review process involving all staff had resulted in a strong, shared commitment to planning a coherent, exciting and enriched range of experiences. Most subjects had a broad curriculum which included opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking. The curriculum for Arabic as an additional language was less well developed and was a priority for further improvement. Transition arrangements were seamless due to the students' progressive acquisition of skills and the consistent approach to the curriculum. Extensive cross-curricular links enhanced students' learning, for example in information and communication technology (ICT) and science where Year 4 students created an animation of daily activities which affect heart rates. Links with real-life situations were emphasised through practical applications in subjects such as mathematics which involved students in designing aspects of the new school buildings. The extensive range of extra-curricular activities extended students' participation in new and challenging experiences. The school had very good links with the local, national and international communities, and the older students spoke enthusiastically about camping trips to the Northern Emirates and Oman.

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

Measures taken by the school to ensure students' health and safety were outstanding. All staff applied themselves diligently to the care and well-being of students. Detailed policies and procedures were applied consistently across the school day. All external visits were thoroughly assessed for risk. Not all parts of the school were accessible by students with physical disabilities. The building was very well maintained, clean and tidy, and learning and teaching resources were kept in good order. Emergency evacuation drills took place and were efficiently recorded. The administration of medication was recorded and safe storage of medicines and of students' records was assured. Across the school, very good attention was given to the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Students were encouraged to eat healthily, drink plenty of fluid and to participate in a wide range of physical activities, including weekly swimming at all stages. Staff were knowledgeable about the school's procedures for child protection. Students had ready access to the school nurse and a doctor visited the school each week.

The quality of support for children in the Foundation Stage was outstanding and for primary students, it was good. Staff-student relationships were based on mutual respect. Staff monitored students' attendance and time-keeping carefully. The management of student care and health was of a high order. The quality of support for students with additional learning needs was good overall. Teachers and teaching assistants provided effective support to small groups and individuals. The school had responded very effectively to the previous inspection recommendation to devise student-friendly, individual educational programmes. These were agreed with parents and formally reviewed twice per year, although students did not receive regular enough feedback from their teachers about their progress. 'These were agreed with parents and formally reviewed twice per year'. The specific learning needs of students were not always identified to enable appropriate early intervention. The school gave good support to parents at decision-making times regarding transfer of their children to the next phase of schooling.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

Under the very effective leadership of the recently appointed headteacher, the school had built on its considerable strengths. The vision expressed in the school's motto, 'the best by every child', was apparent in all aspects of the school's work. Relationships across the school were outstanding and highly productive. In addition to the very strong drive for improvement evident in approach of all leaders, staff at every level were empowered to share their ideas and contribute to the school's development. The school's record of improvement and common sense of purpose indicated an outstanding capacity for innovation and further development.

The key priorities for improvement were informed by a combination of internal self-review and consultation with parents and students. Assessment information was carefully analysed to spot trends in students' performance and address any anomalies. Action planning was particularly strong. Each member of the leadership team led a development group, including staff from different year groups, which addressed each priority. As a result, the school had sustained its overall effectiveness in over recent years, underlining its outstanding capacity for further improvement.

The school's partnership with parents remained outstanding and had been further enhanced by innovations introduced by the headteacher. Communication routes were many and varied. Progress reports were highly informative and learning journals with targets, reflections and self-assessments were always available for parents and students. Strong links with the local community through school educational visits trips contributed to students' understanding of local culture, traditions, values and beliefs.

Board members were well informed about the school's performance. They had gained this information previously from reports by the chief education officer and the headteacher. At the time of the inspection, three parents had been invited to join the board in order to gain an additional perspective. They were extremely well informed about their role in providing a conduit for parental views, acting as critical friends

and holding the school to account, although they had yet to attend the first meeting of the newly constituted board.

Staff were appropriately qualified and deployed highly effectively. New teachers were inducted very successfully and there were ample opportunities for all staff develop their skills through further training. The compact campus offered a range of high-quality facilities including a multi-purpose assembly hall, a gymnasium, a games court, a swimming pool, a field and wireless technology. The library space was limited and did not include space for students to research topics or for casual browsing. The outdoor hard standing court lacked shade during some periods of the day, which detracted from the quality of students' learning and enjoyment. However, a new extension was due to open in September 2012 to overcome these issues.

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	126	45%
	Last year	186	66%
Teachers	18		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 one half of parents responded to the survey, a slightly lower rate than last year. More than a half of the teachers responded to their survey. Almost all parents indicated strong satisfaction with the quality of education available at the school. They were particularly happy with the quality of teaching and way the school had the care and well-being of their children at its heart. The majority noted strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics, science and Arabic. A majority of parents believed that inspection had led to improvements at the school, but about a third indicated that they did not know. The majority of teachers felt that inspection had helped them improve their practice. Parents and teachers were very positive in their views of the school's provision across a range of aspects.

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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