

Repton School Inspection Report

Foundation Stage to Year 12

Report published May 2010

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Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report

Outstanding – exceptionally high quality of performance or practice.

Good – the expected level of quality for every school in Dubai.

Acceptable – the minimum level of acceptability required for Dubai. All key aspects of performance and practice in every school should meet or exceed this level.

Unsatisfactory – quality not yet at the level acceptable for schools in Dubai. Schools will be expected to take urgent measures to improve the quality of any aspect of their performance or practice that is judged at this level.

Repton School was inspected in January 2010 as part of the regular inspection of all schools in Dubai. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated students' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on students' progress in Islamic Education (for Muslim Students), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Nad al Sheba, Repton School is a private school currently providing education for boys and girls from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 12; students' ages currently span from three to 17 years. The school follows the English National Curriculum to the age of 16, with the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme in Year 12. At the time of the inspection there were 1,680 students on roll. Enrolments had increased substantially in the current academic year; around forty percent of the students were new to Repton School, and there was around twice as many students in the Junior School as in the Senior School. Approximately one sixth of the students had been identified as having special educational needs. This increase in diversity in academic backgrounds was limiting overall levels of attainment and rates of progress, particularly in the Senior School. The student attendance rate reported by the school for the last academic session was good, although attendance in the EYFS was unsatisfactory.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Almost half the parents responded to the questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly positive about the school. Almost all reported that their children liked school and that their progress was at least good in English, mathematics and science. A significant minority indicated that they were unsure about their children's progress in Islamic Education and Arabic. Almost all parents agreed that behaviour was good, that their children worked hard and were expected to do their best and that they were being encouraged to be independent and responsible people. They liked the good range of extra-curricular activities available. Parents believed that their children were treated fairly at school and they felt comfortable about approaching the school with a question or complaint. Almost all reported

that the school gave them good information about their children's progress. Most parents reported that they were well informed about how they might be able to help their children with their school work and that teachers showed concern for the care and welfare of their children. Most believed that if they raised a matter of concern, then the school would do something about it and that the school had good links with parents. Almost all parents reported that they felt that the school was well led. Almost one-third were unsure about the quality of the school's links with the local community and over four in ten were unsure about the school's response to the previous inspection report.

How well does the school perform overall?

Repton School provided a good quality of education which had some outstanding features. Notable amongst these features were the outstanding attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the students and the excellent relationships with parents. The students' excellent attitudes, behaviour and personal development were evident in their self-discipline, courtesy and care for one another. In the EYFS, attainment and progress were good in communication and language learning and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment was good and progress was acceptable in mathematical development. In the Junior School attainment was good in English and science and acceptable in Islamic Education, Arabic and mathematics. At this phase, progress was good in science and acceptable in Islamic Education, Arabic and English. Students showed a good understanding of and respect for Islam and they had a good awareness of Dubai's place in the world and the impact of the world recession upon the local economy. Students had a good appreciation of environmental issues.

The quality of teaching was good in the Junior School and acceptable in the older years; around half the lessons being good or outstanding. In the planning and delivery of lessons, teachers did not always take into account the learning needs of an increasingly diverse student population and, on occasions, they talked for too long and failed to engage less-academic students in their learning. Assessment was acceptable, although several teachers were not using the information from assessments to modify their lessons. The curriculum was good in the EYFS and acceptable elsewhere. It gave a range of opportunities for most students in terms of breadth and balance. The curriculum was enhanced considerably by a great number of sporting and cultural extra-curricular activities. The arrangements for health and safety were of an acceptable quality; not all staff were aware of procedures relating to child protection. Support was good in the Junior School and acceptable for senior and older students. The main shortcoming at the senior phase was the absence of formal guidance for careers and post-secondary education.

Leadership and school self-evaluation were acceptable. The outstanding partnerships with parents were characterised by the good attendance by parents at school events and their capacity to operate as partners in learning with the school for the benefit of their children. Governance arrangements were acceptable. The school buildings and resources for learning were of a very high quality.

Key features of the school

- The outstanding attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the students;
- The excellent partnerships with parents;
- The exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for the students;
- The excellent provision in the Nursery and Reception classes;
- The outstanding quality of the facilities and resources for learning.

Recommendations

- Ensure that there is a better match between the staffing, facilities and resources and the growing school population of increasingly diverse needs;
- Ensure that all teachers plan and implement lessons which meet the learning needs of all students in mainstream classes;
- Review the curriculum to match it more closely with students' learning needs;
- Ensure that all staff are fully aware of child protection procedures;
- Improve the links between the Junior and Senior Schools to improve the transition as students move through the school.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education in the primary and secondary phases were acceptable. Most students had an acceptable knowledge and understanding of basic Islamic concepts. They had acceptable knowledge of the early life of the Prophet (PBUH). For example, in Year 1, most students were able to correctly list the five pillars of Islam and talk about their understanding. In Year 9, most students displayed an age-appropriate understanding of the meaning of responsibility and accountability in Islam and could give examples of how different people in society fulfil these requirements. Across the school most students memorised the required chapters from The Holy Qur'an, with most students in the lower Junior School showing good progress in the application of Tajweed (recitation rules). However, in the Senior School, students' recitation during class was not of consistently high quality and this was linked with their reading abilities in Arabic.

Students' attainment and progress in Arabic in both the Junior and Senior Schools were acceptable. Most students' listening skills were well developed; they listened purposefully and followed instructions accurately. Students' speaking skills were acceptable. In the lower junior years most students were continuing to develop their pronunciation of Arabic letters as expected. In the senior section, most students could use Classical Arabic to answer closed

questions but only a minority were able to use Classical Arabic confidently to express themselves clearly. Students learning Arabic as a first language had an acceptable understanding of grammatical concepts and the majority could apply those rules correctly to short sentences. Additional language learners were able to recognise new vocabulary, although not all students were confident in writing these words independently or using them outside the context of the text. Most students' reading skills were limited to reading familiar words in the textbook.

In English, attainment was good in the EYFS and Junior School. Elsewhere attainment was acceptable. Children in EYFS made good progress and demonstrated skills which were above expectations for their age. In the Junior School progress was acceptable; students made expected progress and left with well-developed skills. Students from diverse backgrounds made good progress in a modified curriculum. Students in the Junior School spoke confidently and listened carefully to their peers and their teachers. Among the younger age groups, role-play activities encouraged the development of speaking skills further and helped to extend their vocabulary. Throughout the Junior School, students' handwriting and presentation skills were good, as was their understanding of grammar, spelling and basic comprehension. However, at this stage, students did not use their skills effectively to write for different purposes and different audiences. Most students in the Senior School made acceptable progress and attained levels which were broadly in line with international expectations. Students applied their skills appropriately through a variety of oral and written tasks. They demonstrated an acceptable knowledge of the key features of different genres. They responded to questioning by their teachers, but few asked their own questions or demonstrated independent learning.

In the EYFS, attainment in mathematics was good and children made acceptable progress. Children were able to apply their knowledge and understanding effectively in different contexts. Across the rest of the school, attainment and progress were acceptable. In tests, most students attained levels in line with international expectations. Students in the junior phase developed number skills and awareness of shape and measure in line with expectations. A minority progressed more quickly, achieving above expectations. Senior School students made acceptable progress. Most students could think independently in both applied and abstract ways. Higher attainers in Year 9 confidently investigated time/velocity graphs. Students in Year 12 had an acceptable understanding when revisiting the sine and cosine rule. However, a few lacked confidence when solving problems in two and three dimensions.

Attainment in science was consistently good in the EYFS and primary phases and acceptable in the secondary phase. In the EYFS, children developed their knowledge and understanding of the natural world through discovery and exploration. By the end of the primary phase, almost all students showed a good appreciation of the concept of a fair test and regularly and accurately used scientific vocabulary, practical processes and methods. They achieved above international averages in school tests which were aligned to the English National Curriculum. In the secondary phase, students had a basic understanding of factual science, such as cell structure, chemical displacement reactions, and electrical circuits, but their practical skills were underdeveloped.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' behaviour and attitudes were outstanding throughout the school. Students demonstrated high levels of self-discipline, with respect and care for others. They had highly positive attitudes towards their studies and appreciated the lengths to which teachers were prepared to go to aid them with their work. They collaborated well and demonstrated a commendable level of maturity.

Students' Islamic, cultural and civic understanding was good. They had a good knowledge of multi-cultural Dubai. Students showed respect for Islam gaining both from their Islamic Education classes and their peers. Whilst there was recognition of the benefits of a multi-cultural Dubai, most students had difficulty contextualising the specific gains from exposure to the different cultural backgrounds. Students were fully committed to the school, participating in the wealth of activities available. Students were highly appreciative of the opportunities to take responsibility and develop leadership skills through, for example, the prefect system, student council, clubs and societies.

Students had good knowledge of the place of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and the wider world. They knew the significant personalities who had inspired and led the development of the Emirate. Almost all had some understanding of the financial resources in Dubai and the main industries. They were aware of the economic climate and the impact that it had on Dubai. Most had good knowledge of the environmental issues facing the Emirate and the world, such as pollution and over-population. The school's Green Day, seen during the inspection, exemplified this.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good in the EYFS and Junior phases and acceptable in the Senior and Post-16 phases. On the whole, teachers knew their subjects well, but in some cases they were insufficiently skilled at designing their lessons to cater for the wide ability range of students in the secondary and post-16 phases. Most teachers used a range of resources to good effect, including the electronic interactive whiteboards. In a few observed cases, teachers did not make good use of lesson time through effective planning. At times, teachers talked too much and did not require their students to think through open-ended and challenging questioning. In a few observed cases in the secondary and post-16 phases, teacher-student interactions were sufficiently stimulating to require students to draw on previous knowledge, make new connections or speculate and take risks - these elements being of central importance to the development of IB diploma-level learners.

The quality of learning was good in the EYFS and in the Junior School and acceptable elsewhere. Students were engaged and took responsibility for their own learning, however on a few occasions, lessons did not go beyond learning facts or routinely practising skills. When given opportunities, students negotiated successfully, worked together in pairs and teams, discussed tasks, negotiate roles and resolved conflicts. These activities were occasionally evident in lessons. The successful application of enquiry and research skills was seen in some classes where there were higher attaining students in the secondary phase.

The assessment strategies and the use of the assessment data were good in the EYFS and acceptable elsewhere in the school. Teachers did not always use assessment information to inform the teaching and learning process. In most cases assessment was used summarily at the end of pieces of work or phases.

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

The curriculum in EYFS was good. It offered breadth and balance and satisfied the varying needs of a wide range of children. In the subsequent phases of the school, provision derived largely from the English National Curriculum, the IGCSE and the IB Diploma Programme respectively. This acceptable provision gave a range of opportunities for most students in terms of breadth and balance. The provision in the Senior School included subjects such as history, geography, music, art and modern foreign languages, further mathematics and a wide range of sports activities. Extra support in mathematics and English was available to most students, although this often proved difficult for Muslim students to access owing to timetable requirements. However, in all but the EYFS, there was not a close match of the curriculum with students' learning needs. Over most of the school, thematic and cross-curricular elements were best represented by the ambitious and successful extra-curricular programme, which successfully involved all students in sporting, cultural, social and economic activities in the school, the Emirates and beyond. Overseas visits were carefully planned to give benefit to the curriculum, including for example, the recent visit to a series of theatres in England. Links with local and international business partners frequently created opportunities for students to compete or take on leadership roles. Whilst individual sections had begun the process of curriculum review, this had yet to be strongly established on a whole-school basis.

How well does the school protect and support students?

The arrangements to ensure health, safety and security of students were, for the most part, acceptable. There were effective measures in place to ensure that students were kept safe, although not all relevant staff were aware of procedures relating to child protection. The arrangements for security and access required review. The school premises, equipment and resources were of a good standard and regularly checked and maintained. Records of health and safety procedures were up to date and a range of risk assessments were routinely undertaken. Fire drills were carried out efficiently by staff and students as was evidenced during the inspection. Medical staff carried out their duties effectively. They had well

developed systems for administering medicines and for alerting staff and parents to any incidents or accidents which may have occurred during the school day. They had evaluated their procedures and made improvements where necessary. Good opportunities existed for students to take part in physical activities and a newly established food committee was beginning to improve the provision in the canteen. Medical staff checked students' lunch boxes daily and provided them with advice on healthy eating.

The school provided good support and guidance for the students in the early years and primary phases and mostly acceptable support in secondary and post-16. Relationships throughout the whole school were good and mutually respectful. Students received advice and guidance from some staff about their progress. Whilst there was no one in charge of careers advice in the Senior School, staff had made effective arrangements to ensure that older students had access to information to help them make important decisions. The tracking of students' academic progress and the identification and management of students with special educational needs were acceptable across the school. However, students with special educational needs were not supported effectively in all classes, notably in the Senior School. Support for those students who had English as an additional language in the Senior School was variable. Students who attended the Reading Academy made good progress through a tailored programme which met their individual needs.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management was acceptable. The school was led by the Headmaster with competence and a clear personal commitment to Repton School's core values. However, there was too little liaison between the headteachers in charge of the Junior and Senior Schools. As a consequence, these two main school sections operated as two quite distinct units. The quality of subject leadership was not consistently high and the continuity and progression of students' learning was impeded by each subject having separate subject co-ordinators at primary and secondary level, who did not work with each other. Routine monitoring of lessons by subject leaders was not an established practice, one consequence of which was the widely varied quality of teaching observed.

Systems for self-evaluation and development planning were acceptable overall; they were more effective in the Junior School. As a consequence of a large increase in enrolment of students, the school was reacting to changes rather than proactively planning for them. Nevertheless, the school had created a self-evaluation document based on the DSIB quality indicators. All staff members were involved in self-evaluation, through membership of small working groups. These groups contributed to the Junior and Senior School development plans. The school's response to the recommendations contained in the previous inspection report was partial. Child protection procedures required further development, and there remained some health and safety concerns.

The school's partnerships with parents were outstanding. Parents, particularly those of younger children, were strongly supportive and most were closely involved in their children's education and the wider life of the school. The school kept them well informed about their children's general progress and parents strongly supported the many cultural, sporting and social events organised by the school.

The quality of governance was acceptable in most respects. The governing body benefited from parental representation and senior school leaders were directly and formally accountable to the board.

The staffing, facilities and resources at the school were good. The buildings and resources for learning were of outstanding quality with elegant and inspiring architecture coupled with excellent classroom resources and specialist facilities. The recent rapid growth of the school and greater diversity in ability of the students meant that some teachers were challenged.

Summary of inspection judgements

In their evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school, the inspection team made judgements about the following aspects of the school's performance.

Four descriptors are: Outstanding; Good; Acceptable; Unsatisfactory.

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good is the students' personal and social development?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

How good are teaching and learning?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of support	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Acceptable
Staffing, facilities and resources	Good

How well does the school perform overall?
Good

Next Steps

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. 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.

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