

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Collegiate American School

Report published in April 2013

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Collegiate American School

Location	Umm Suqeim 3
Type of school	Private
Website	www.casdubai.com
Telephone	04-368-4111
Address	P O Box 121306, Dubai
Principal	Dina Khalaf
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades	3-13 / Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 8
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	550
Largest nationality group of Students	US
Number of Emirati students	19 (3%)
Date of the inspection	7th to 9th January 2013

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## The context of the school

Collegiate American School, situated in Umm Suqeim, opened in September 2011. At the time of the inspection, there were 550 boys and girls on roll, aged three to 13 years. In the previous academic year, there were 250 boys and girls on roll, aged three to 10 years. The school consisted of almost 50 different nationalities.

The school followed a standards-based curriculum using the Common Core State Standards developed in the USA. At the time of the inspection, no students had been entered for any external examinations. The school curriculum was split into three phases covering the Kindergarten (including pre-Kindergarten), elementary phase (Grades 1 to 5) and middle phase (Grades 6 to 8). Approximately 20 per cent of the students studied Arabic as a first language and three per cent of the students were Emiratis.

At the time of the inspection, there were 50 teachers in the school of which 30 had just joined. All were well qualified and suitably experienced. Teachers were supported by 27 classroom assistants and nine teaching assistants. The Principal and Deputy Principal had been in post since September 2012.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- The good progress made by students in English, mathematics and science;
- Students' positive attitudes and behaviour as well as the supportive relationships between students, teachers and school leaders;
- The breadth of the curriculum and the extensive programme of after-school activities;
- The outstanding provision for health and safety which enabled students to feel safe, valued and well cared for in an orderly environment;
- The vision and commitment of the Principal and Deputy Principal as well as their capacity to improve the school further.

### Recommendations

- Raise students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Improve students' personal and social development by:
  - increasing attendance and ensuring that students arrive at school on time;
  - raising their awareness and understanding of Islamic values;
  - highlighting the importance of conservation and environmental sustainability;
- Improve teaching and learning by:
  - providing appropriate challenge for the full spread of abilities in the classes;
  - ensuring that higher attaining students are sufficiently stretched and challenged;
  - developing students' enquiry and critical thinking skills;
- Make better use of assessment information for planning learning, checking progress and giving feedback to students;
- Develop the management structure to take account of the increasing size of the school.

## Progress since the last inspection

This was the first inspection of the school.

## Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle
<b>Islamic Education</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good
<b>Science</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

## How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

## 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	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment in the key subjects was varied. In Islamic Education attainment was acceptable in the elementary phase and unsatisfactory in the middle school. Recitation and memorisation of The Holy Qur'an were weak in the middle school and too many students were unable to link learning to their daily life practices. Students' attainment was unsatisfactory in Arabic as a first language because the students' speaking, reading, and writing skills were below the curriculum expectations. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was acceptable and students were able to read simple statements and match sounds to letters. Writing skills were less well developed. In English, attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening was acceptable, as students demonstrated age-appropriate skills. Attainment in mathematics was good but not all students were good at applying their number skills when solving problems. Attainment in science was acceptable. Students showed a secure knowledge and understanding of key concepts and could research information well. Students used technology effectively and efficiently. Students' literacy skills were supported well in mathematics and science although practical and investigative skills were less effectively developed.

Students' progress was good in English, mathematics and science. Progress in Islamic Education was acceptable in the elementary phase and unsatisfactory in the middle phase. Most students made acceptable progress in learning the Qur'an but insufficient progress in developing their Islamic knowledge and concepts. Students' progress was acceptable in Arabic as a first language in the elementary phase and unsatisfactory in the middle phase, especially in using Arabic to communicate. In Arabic as an additional language, progress was acceptable in terms of listening, speaking, and reading skills. Progress in writing was limited. In English, mathematics and science, children developed their awareness of new concepts quickly in the Kindergarten and the range of experiences in the other phases contributed well to their knowledge and understanding. Students spoke with increasing confidence up through the grades. They could read and respond to comprehension questions with accuracy. Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress.

[View judgments](#)

## How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students' attainment and progress were broadly similar to that of other groups. Their attainment was acceptable in English and science, although good in mathematics. Students made good progress in English, mathematics and science. In Islamic Education, attainment and progress were acceptable. In Arabic, attainment was unsatisfactory but progress was acceptable given the students' low starting points. Much of the unsatisfactory achievement was related to less effective teaching. In other subjects,

attainment and progress were better as students benefited from stronger teaching and good resources. The school's analysis of the progress made by Emiratis showed a full range of individual achievement profiles but there was no significant variation from those of other groups of students. Emirati parents were actively involved in the UAE National Day celebrations and two members of the Board of Governors were Emirati.

### How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behavior were good. Almost all students behaved responsibly and demonstrated appropriate self-control inside and outside of classes. Relationships between teachers and students were courteous and respectful. They treated students with special educational needs with kindness, offering assistance when needed. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles was demonstrated well by their choices of healthy foods and regular exercise. Attendance was acceptable but at a lower rate in the Kindergarten. Punctuality was a problem for certain students. Students across the school displayed basic levels of understanding and appreciation of Islam. Not all students had enough understanding of the relevance and importance of Islamic values in their everyday lives. Students' appreciation of the culture and traditions of the UAE were well developed throughout the school. Most students understood and celebrated their own cultures and they were aware of other cultures, especially those represented within the school. Students across the school carried out some social responsibilities and a student council had recently been established. Most students understood the importance of protecting the environment but their appreciation of the importance of conservation and environmental sustainability lacked depth.

[View judgments](#)

### How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the elementary and middle phases of the school. Teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic was acceptable but, in a few instances, unsatisfactory. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and enjoyed supportive working relationships with their students. Teachers made good use of praise and encouragement to engage and motivate students to achieve well. The use of technology was a strength, especially in English, science and the Kindergarten. Lesson planning was undertaken collaboratively but did not always build upon students' prior knowledge, especially when students had recently joined the school. In the lessons observed, teachers did not always take account of the spread of abilities in their classes. In the Kindergarten teachers were more sensitive to students' different needs. Teachers had a breadth of teaching strategies and made good use of a range of resources.

However, the level of challenge in some lessons was not high enough, especially for higher attaining students, and this restricted their progress. There were particular strengths in the teaching of English, mathematics, science, music, art and physical education, but the teaching of Islamic Education and Arabic had significant weaknesses.

Learning was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the elementary and middle phases of the school. Students worked co-operatively with one another and focused well in their lessons. The best lessons were when teachers involved students and encouraged research and independent learning skills; this was most often evident in the Kindergarten. The application of learning to the world outside school was not always evident. Students used technology confidently and to good effects in supporting their learning. However, critical thinking and enquiry skills were not actively encouraged.

Assessment was acceptable in the Kindergarten and elementary phases, but good in the middle phase, where there was more regular and detailed analysis of students' attainment. Teachers were steadily developing their expertise in analysing the results of tests to give a standardised picture of attainment and progress in English and mathematics. In the Kindergarten, the tracking of children's scores in areas such as the recognition of key words helped teachers to identify and support students experiencing difficulties, or those making insufficient progress. Most teachers had a good understanding of their classes' strengths and weaknesses. The quality of marking varied widely in its usefulness. Some individual targets were set as a result of testing, but many were too broad to guide students towards improvement and did not sufficiently influence subsequent lesson plans.

[View judgments](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was good. The curriculum was based on a clear rationale consistent with the school's values. It was reviewed regularly and collaboratively. The curriculum was broad, with courses covering the key subjects as well as art, music, information technology, physical education, French, and Spanish. Arabic was taught from Kindergarten 1 upwards. An extensive programme of after-school activities augmented and extended the curriculum, with a later bus service allowing attendance for all interested students. Regular field trips were aligned with curriculum objectives and created links to the local community. The curriculum was balanced with creative and physical experiences. Opportunities to apply students' knowledge and skills were limited to a minority of classes, such as science, where students covered a range of topics linked to real life. Good progression of skills and induction activities prepared students to be successful when moving up to their next levels of schooling. The curriculum was

planned to address the learning needs of all groups of students but higher attaining students were not sufficiently challenged.

[View judgments](#)

## How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students were outstanding. The school provided clean and well-maintained buildings, together with equipment in excellent condition, making an excellent environment to support learning. The supervision of students was robust inside and outside of the classrooms. Transport safety arrangements were thorough and well resourced. Healthy living was a regular feature of the curriculum. Frequent initiatives promoted students' well-being and contributed to their awareness of healthy lifestyles. Management of medical procedures and fire drills was rigorous and child protection arrangements were secure. Students felt safe and well cared for.

The quality of support was good. Staff members enjoyed very good relationships with their students. Teachers knew their students well and were fully aware of their individual intellectual, physical and social needs. All students had ready access to members of staff who provided well-informed advice and guidance about a range of important matters. Students' behavior was managed well. Teachers made good use of praise and encouragement. Information about attendance was accurately kept, but not sufficiently analysed to identify trends. Punctuality was not sufficiently monitored or pursued. All teachers received annual training on child protection issues.

[View judgments](#)

## How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

The school had effective systems for identifying students with special educational needs. Students were supported well through individual learning plans, including classroom modifications and individual support where necessary. Policies and practices for students with special educational needs were carefully followed and information was shared between teachers, so that students were well supported. Suitable classroom facilities were provided for students in all subject areas and, if necessary, the curriculum was modified. Overall, their progress was acceptable. Professional development was ongoing to help teachers provide more effective support for students' independent learning. Parents agreed that the school welcomed and supported students with special educational needs.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership of the school was good. The Principal and Deputy Principal provided strong leadership for the school and had clear understanding of the improvements needed. They acted swiftly to address any deficiencies and inducted new staff members quickly into the school. Senior leaders were very well supported by middle managers, who shared a clear direction and commitment to the values of the school. Leaders were clearly focused on improving teaching and learning whilst ensuring high standards of care and welfare. Teachers had received ongoing training related to the perceived areas of weakness, including teaching and assessment. However, the significant numbers of new teachers meant that providing consistently good teaching remained a challenge.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The Principal as well as the governors had an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school benefited greatly from the involvement of various stakeholders in the process of self-evaluation. Self-evaluation documents had been compiled and action plans completed, but they were not sufficiently focused on long-term goals. The school improvement plan was extensive, but did not identify priorities for improvement. Appraisal systems were relatively new and the professional development needs of teachers were being acted upon.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents agreed that teachers were approachable. They felt able to contact the school about any concerns which they had. A good communication system was in place and the school's website provided a wealth of information. Partnerships with the community and partner schools were beneficial.

Parents were positive about the work of the school and the leadership of the Principal. However, a significant number of parents were concerned that they were not always listened to or sufficiently involved in decision making. Parents thought that the school was particularly good at building students' confidence and self-esteem in a safe and secure environment.

Governance was good and the directors had accurate knowledge of the school. They held the school accountable and received regular updates from the Principal. They had a realistic and accurate view of the school, including strengths and areas requiring improvement. The Board of Directors was supported by an Advisory Council representing a variety of stakeholders, including members of the community and representation from parents. The Advisory Council was strongly committed to the school but had not been operating for enough time to ensure that it reflected and represented the views of all stakeholders.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was good. Teachers were well qualified and well deployed, although the leadership of key subjects across this growing school was not fully established.

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Daily routines were efficient and the good quality premises were effectively managed. The school's learning resources were varied, appropriate and of high quality, particularly the class-based technology resources. Specialist areas such as the library and science laboratory were of high quality but were not fully exploited for learning.

[View judgments](#)

## 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	81	19%
	Last year	0	0%
Teachers	22		41%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

Approximately one fifth of the parents responded to the survey and almost all were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. Almost all parents felt that their children were making good progress in English. A minority of parents expressed concern over the progress made by students in Islamic Education and Arabic. Parents agreed that their children enjoyed school, behaved well and felt safe, especially on the buses. Most parents thought that the school was well led. The on-line survey was also completed to by 22 teachers. Almost all teachers confirmed that students behaved well and agreed that students enjoyed school and felt safe. Most teachers said that the school was well led, but a minority disagreed that leaders listened to their opinions or involved them in decision making.



## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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