

# INSPECTION REPORT

## The City School International Private

Report published in April, 2014

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The City School International Private

Location	Nad Al Hamar
Type of school	Private
Website	www.tcs-uae.com
Telephone	04-2899722
Address	DUBAI-NAD AL HAMAR-P.O.BOX:5760
Principal	Kaneez-e-Ali
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / KG 1-Grade 11
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	650
Largest nationality group of Students	Pakistani
Number of Emirati students	24 (4.14%)
Date of the inspection	21st October to 23rd October

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## The context of the school

The City School International, located in Nad Al Hamar, provides education for students from Kindergarten to Grade 11, aged three to 17 years of age. Students in the school were mainly of Pakistani heritage with smaller numbers of Arabs, Asians, Indians and Iranians. Approximately one tenth of the students studied Arabic as a first language and about two per cent of the students were Emiratis. The school had identified 72 students as having some form of special educational need.

The school's curriculum is based upon the National Curriculum for England and adapted to ensure an awareness of the UAE's local culture and traditions. Students are entered for external IGCSE examinations in Grade 11.

Students were enrolled in the Foundation Stage, primary phase (Grades 1 to 5) and secondary phase (Grades 6 to 11). Students continue their post-16 education at a variety of other educational establishments.

The Principal had been in post since January 2013 and many of the senior management posts were relatively new including heads of section and subject leaders. At the time of the inspection, the school had 650 boys and girls on roll compared with 425 in the previous year.

## Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- The good attainment and progress in English in the primary and secondary phases;
- Recent improvements in the learning, teaching, assessment and leadership of the Foundation Stage;
- Students' personal and social development including their awareness of Islamic values;
- The curriculum, which provided a breadth of extra curriculum activities and ensured that students were well prepared for the next stage of their education;
- The strong and committed leadership of the Principal and her senior staff actively supported by parents and the governing body.

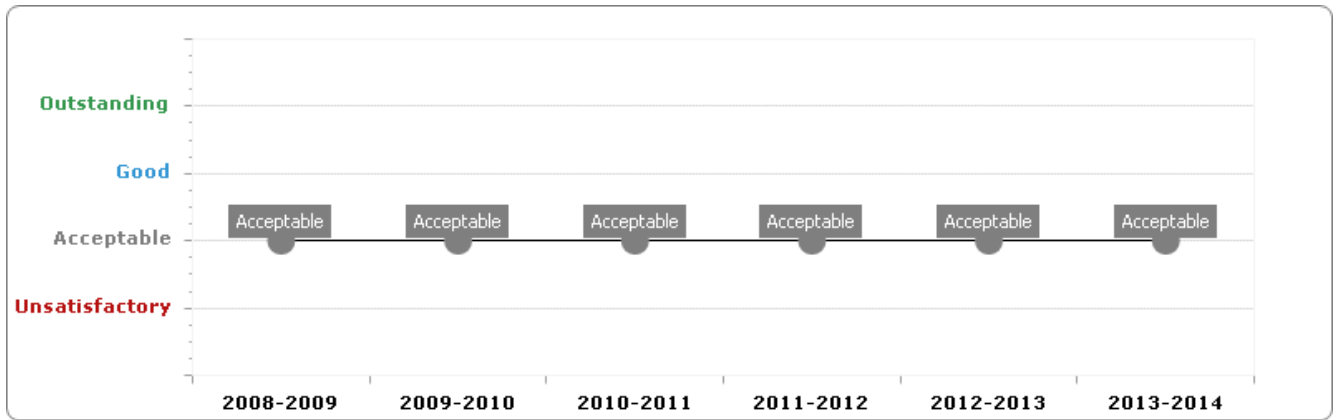
### Recommendations

- Make better use of assessment data to plan lessons that take account of the spread of ability and provide work that encourages students' responsibility for their learning;
- Prioritise the raising of attainment and progress across key subjects through school improvement planning;
- Use information from external examinations and other sources to inform self-evaluation;
- Improve procedures for identifying, supporting and meeting the educational needs of all groups of students especially those with special educational needs.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Arabic progress in the secondary phase and English attainment and progress in the primary phase have improved;
- Learning, teaching, assessment and leadership have improved in the Foundation Stage;
- The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and the primary phase was better;
- Leadership, governance and the management of staffing, facilities and resources have all improved.

## Trend of overall performance



## How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
<b>Islamic Education</b>			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b>			
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b>			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Science</b>			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Quality of students' learning skills	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Good	Good	Good
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable. Students demonstrated their knowledge of Islamic practice and recounted stories of the Prophets but their Qur'an recitation skills were less secure. Primary students had adequate reading and listening skills in Arabic as a first language and appropriate listening skills in Arabic as an additional language. Writing and speaking skills were less developed in both subjects, especially in the secondary phase. Across the two phases, a significant proportion of students of Arabic as an additional language had underdeveloped reading abilities. In English, children's listening skills were good in the Foundation Stage and most students in the primary school were able to speak articulately and with enthusiasm. Extended writing, including creative and narrative forms, was strong in the secondary phase. In mathematics, basic number skills were effectively promoted but opportunities to develop mathematical thinking and critical thinking skills were rarely seen. In science, students had a solid grounding in topics such as the senses and colours in Foundation Stage through to body systems in the primary phase and the structure of molecules in the secondary phase. Science attainment was acceptable throughout the school.

Students' progress in Islamic Education was acceptable but was limited in Qur'an recitation. Progress in speaking fluently and independent writing was significantly slower in Arabic as a first and as an additional language but was acceptable overall. In English, Foundation Stage children made acceptable progress from low starting points. Good progress was made in the primary phase, with the acquisition of English vocabulary through learning and singing songs. Secondary students' varied use of vocabulary, such as 'ravaged' and 'unfortunate', demonstrated good progress. In mathematics, most children made satisfactory progress in number and shape. In the secondary phase, their progress in mathematical thinking and critical thinking skills was limited due to a lack of opportunity. In science, most students in most classes progressed in line with expectations.

[View judgements](#)

## Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning skills was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary and secondary phases. Students in all phases had positive attitudes towards their studies and worked well individually, in pairs and in groups. They enthusiastically took part in activity-based learning and showed skills of independent learning and critical thinking when given the opportunity. This was particularly evident in the Foundation Stage where practical learning was a regular feature. Presentations in subjects such as Islamic Education also enabled students to demonstrate their learning and reinforce it. However, in many lessons, there were insufficient opportunities for students to link their learning to previous work or to real

life including other subjects. Teachers tended to dominate lessons, so that students, while still positive about their learning, often became passive.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students' personal and social development was good across the school. The majority of students were very well behaved in class and around the school. There were strong relationships, between teachers and students and between students and their peers. Students worked co-operatively with each other showing sensitivity towards others as seen, for example, in a PHSE lesson on being friendly towards students arriving in the middle of the year. Students were well aware of the importance of healthy eating and exercise with many of them regularly involved in a range of sporting activities. Attendance was acceptable and slightly better in the Foundation Stage and primary phase. Punctuality to the school and to lessons was acceptable.

In the Foundation Stage, children were aware of the Islamic features of Dubai. In the primary and secondary phases, they showed a good understanding of how Islamic values and practices influence their lives. They had a strong appreciation of the heritage, culture and traditions of the UAE, demonstrated through National Day celebrations and highlighted through informative displays. Students were able to make insightful comparisons between cultures and life styles in the UAE and their countries of origin.

Students could confidently discuss community and environmental issues appropriate to their ages. They understood their responsibilities as members of the school community and contributed to the school's vision and mission statements. They collaborated well on community and environmental projects such as bake sales, car free days and community clean-up projects but student-initiated activities were less evident. Students made valid and helpful contributions to assemblies which regularly included student presentations and performances.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary and secondary phases. The majority of the teaching was acceptable with approximately one third of the lessons rated as good but with few outstanding lessons. Teachers had a strong commitment and enthusiasm for their subjects but gave too much emphasis to teaching rather than to learning. Lesson planning was detailed and made use of a growing repertoire of teaching strategies including group work that enabled them to monitor, support and coach individual students and groups. There was good use of questions and resources to facilitate learning in many

classes, particularly in English lessons. Foundation Stage teachers used play and activity methods very well to aid learning. However, the pace of many lessons was often slow, with too much time used to consolidate previous work, and many teachers talking for too long so that students were less involved. The use of technology, critical thinking and independent learning were under-developed across the school.

Assessment was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary and secondary phases. Foundation Stage teachers used a wide range of observational strategies to assess what students knew and could do, leading to detailed records which were shared with parents. Strategies such as self-assessment, peer assessment and end of lesson assessments were becoming more common. The school had a wealth of assessment data which was analysed extensively but rarely used to improve teaching and learning, to support planning or to inform self-evaluation. Teachers checked students and their work for understanding, and helped them improve their responses to questions and problems. Teaching, itself, was rarely modified to take account of the spread of ability in the class.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was good. The curriculum was broad, balanced and effectively planned to ensure progression in all subjects. It was organised to allow students to transfer easily to and from other City International Schools in Pakistan. The curriculum was reviewed regularly and modifications were made as a result of examination results. For example, primary teachers had adjusted the Grade 1 curriculum to include some Foundation Stage material and the IGSE curriculum was organised so that it could be completed in two years. Students were given good options and career guidance. Transition arrangements were particularly strong and students were well prepared for the next stages of their education. There was an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities such as ballet, swimming and a scientific society for Grades 1 to 3 as well as drama, public speaking and various sporting teams for Grades 4 to 11. There was good provision for students' personal development. Whilst there were examples of cross-curricular links, these were not well developed and there were limited opportunities for students to carry out independent research in school time or develop their critical thinking skills.

The curriculum design was acceptable across all phases and it met the needs of most students. Modification of the curriculum as a result of examination results and the provision of after-school clubs went some way to providing for students' range of ability and varying interests. Changes had been made to the PHSE programme to meet the different needs of boys and girls, and examination papers were modified for those with learning needs. However, too little account was taken of the needs of groups of students such as those with special education needs and higher attainers.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school's arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of all students were good. Suitable arrangements were in place to ensure that all areas of the school were safe and secure. School transport arrangements and procedures were well supervised. The school was clean and well maintained. The medical team kept detailed records of the needs of all students and ensured that students received the necessary medical care. The canteen was regularly monitored although systems for promoting students' awareness of healthy lifestyles and eating habits were not sufficiently rigorous. The school organised regular fire drills which kept students and adults aware of emergency evacuation procedures. Transportation was orderly and well supervised but seat belts were not routinely worn by students. A detailed child protection policy was in place and all staff were aware of the required steps to ensure students' welfare.

The quality of support for students was acceptable. Good staff and student relationships were observed throughout the school. New students were very well supported in settling into school routines while older students received helpful guidance on their next stages of education. Students were well supported by the social worker who maintained positive links with parents to ensure continuity of care from home to school. All behaviour concerns were quickly resolved with parents. Students' academic progress was recorded and results were reported to parents regularly. Students with special needs did not receive well targeted support as the systems for identifying their specific needs and supporting them effectively within the classroom other than in the Foundation Stage, were at the early stages of development. Well organised systems were in place to monitor absences and punctuality.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of leadership and management was good. The recently appointed Principal provided strong, decisive and purposeful leadership. The Principal, and her senior leadership team, provided a clear strategic direction based on a vision, which took into account the views of staff, students and parents. Professional and purposeful relationships existed between leaders at all levels. The school was working hard to improve teaching and learning. Leadership and management in the school were not complacent about the necessity for further improvement. Capacity to improve further was good.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The school's self-evaluation was undertaken in collaboration with staff, students and parents. The strengths and weaknesses agreed well with the findings of the inspection but judgments were generous against criteria. The school had much externally validated data but the use of data did not sufficiently contribute to self-evaluation and improvement planning. The school had responded well to the recommendations of the last inspection report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents were very supportive of the school as demonstrated in their positive views. They appreciated the school's open door policy. The school promoted parental engagement in their children's education by inviting them into the school as parent helpers. Parents' views were actively encouraged and responded to. The school reported regularly to parents on their children's progress. The school had established links with the local community but many of these were still in the early stages of implementation.

Governance was good. School owners played a significant role in supporting the school, holding the school accountable for its performance and ensuring that the school met its commitments to parents. Governors were particularly supportive in sourcing staff from other City Schools, providing expertise to offer ongoing professional development and using well established systems to undertake data analysis. Governors actively sought out parents' views and acted upon feedback from them.

The schools' day-to-day management systems were effective. Teachers were well qualified, school premises were well maintained and classrooms were well ventilated ensuring a conducive learning environment. Laboratories were well equipped and computer rooms had enough computers for all students. The school had recently invested in more resources, particularly information technology and books, but learning resources in the Foundation Stage required further improvement.

[View judgements](#)

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

Emirati students' attainment and progress were acceptable in all phases. In Islamic Education and Arabic, Emirati students made adequate progress in lessons but in English, their progress was slower. Their involvement in lessons was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary and secondary phases. Engagement with homework was acceptable. Half of the Emirati students were new to the school. Their behaviour in class and out of class was good across the phases. Their attendance and punctuality were acceptable.

Assessment and tracking of their attainment and progress were good in Foundation Stage, and acceptable in the primary and secondary phases. Islamic Education and Arabic curricula met the cultural needs of Emirati

students adequately. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum included UAE celebrations and field trips. In other phases, rich extra-curricular activities provided adequate opportunities for Emirati students to experience their culture and traditions. Emirati students in the secondary phase were offered school activities covering a breadth of content and were provided with helpful information on career choices. Parents were encouraged by the school to be involved as helpers in classrooms and most of them believed that the school prepared their children well for the next stage. Communication between school and parents was regular and parents said that their views were listened to.

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

Students with special education needs made acceptable progress. Children in the Foundation Stage were well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. Students with medical needs throughout the school were fully included. However, the identification of students with special education needs, other than those with medical conditions, was unsatisfactory as there was no member of staff with the relevant expertise to distinguish accurately between students who had special education needs and those who required English language support. Students identified as in need of learning support were withdrawn from class for small group work. However there was no dedicated learning environment with appropriate resources for these students and their progress was unsatisfactory. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) with targets were written for those who had learning support and parents of these students were contacted regularly, although some parents were reluctant to accept that their children had special educational needs. These plans were shared with class teachers. Students were not involved in writing their own IEPs or setting their targets. The curriculum was sometimes adapted to meet individual needs, such as when a student was encouraged to use ICT in English lessons. No students had been identified as gifted or talented.

## How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

Teachers had secure knowledge of the subject but their knowledge about how students learn required development. Most teachers used frequent questions to check the understanding of many students. Lesson plans were organised, had clear objectives and included some use of ICT to support learning but teachers often relied solely on textbooks which limited progress for many students. In too many lessons, there was more focus on the teaching of grammar and vocabulary than on the teaching of the process of writing and development of comprehension skills. Lessons in the primary phase included collaborative and group work



with varying degrees of success. In some lessons teachers did not take students' different needs into account and rarely provided work that would help move each child to the next stage of learning.

The curriculum for Arabic as a first language provided sufficient opportunities for students to develop their knowledge of grammar, and extend vocabulary and reading. Opportunities for the development of independent writing skills and for extended speaking, particularly in the higher grades, were in need of improvement.



## 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	151	27%
	Last year	67	26%
Teachers	38		86%
Students	11		10%

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

Approximately one quarter of the parents responded to the survey which was similar to last year. Parents generally agreed that their children were making good progress in English but were concerned about progress in Arabic. Almost all parents said that their children enjoyed school. Most felt that their children were looked after and safe in the school and on the buses. Parents agreed that students were set appropriate homework and were prepared well for the next stage in their education. One fifth of parents did not feel students made enough use of technology. Additional comments included high staff turnover and improvements since last year. Most teachers responded to the survey but only a few students did so. Almost all teachers and students confirmed that students were well behaved. They said that the school was led well that they were involved 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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