

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Mirdif Private School

Report published in April 2013

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Mirdif Private School

Location	Al Mizhar 1
Type of school	Private
Website	www.mirdifprivateschool.com
Telephone	04-288-3303
Address	P.O. Box 79195 Dubai
Principal	Randa Ghandour, رندا غندور
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-14 / Kindergarten to Grade 9
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	601
Largest nationality group of Students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	428 (71%)
Date of the inspection	10th to 12th December 2012

## Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013 .....	4
Key strengths .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
Progress since the last inspection .....	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development? .....	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? .....	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students? .....	8
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....	8
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	9
How good is the students' personal and social development? .....	9
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? .....	10
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students? .....	11
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	11
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	14
What happens next?.....	15
How to contact us .....	15

## The context of the school

Mirdif Private School is located in Al Mizhar. It provides education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Grade 9. The school roll had increased from 468 students in the previous year to 601 at the time of inspection, mainly through new entrants to the Kindergarten. Most students were in the Kindergarten or the elementary phase (Grades 1 to 5), with a smaller number in middle phase (Grades 6 to 8), and a few in the high school (Grade 9). Almost three-quarters of the students were Emirati, and most students spoke Arabic as their first language. A number of other nationalities were present in the student body.

The school curriculum was modelled on the US New York State standards for English, mathematics and science, while Islamic Education and Arabic followed the UAE Ministry of Education guidelines.

In addition to the Principal, Vice Principal and Director of Curriculum, there were 41 full-time teachers, almost all of whom had appropriate teaching qualifications, and 14 teaching assistants. Twelve new teachers had joined the school in the current session.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- Students' good attainment and progress in Islamic Education, Arabic as a first language and middle school mathematics;
- Students' good personal and social development and the effective provision for students' health and safety;
- The good curriculum provided across all phases of the school;
- The good overall leadership of the school.

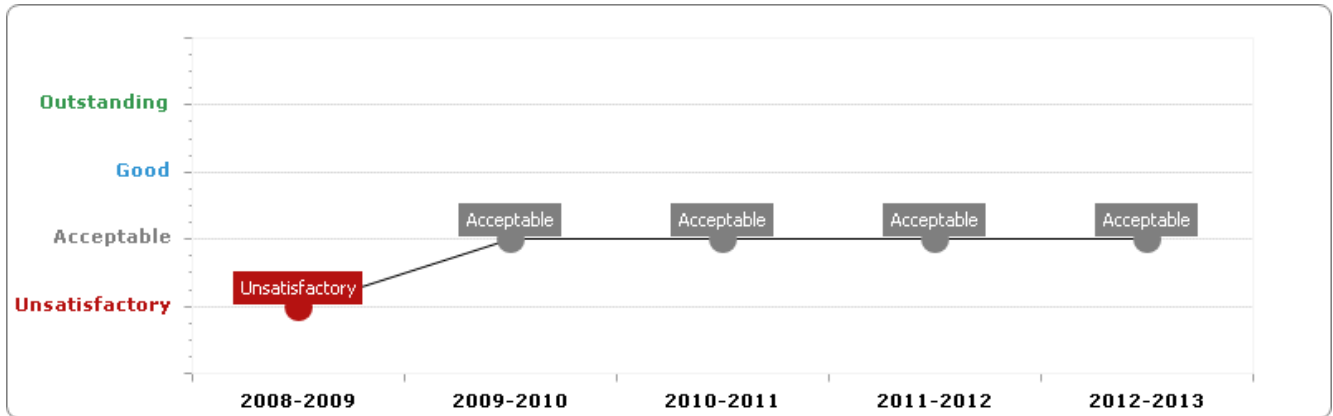
### Recommendations

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, particularly in the Kindergarten and elementary phases;
- Continue to enhance students' learning by giving them more opportunities to learn independently, including the use of information and communications technology;
- Assess the knowledge, understanding and skills of each student more accurately to identify their next steps in learning and teach accordingly;
- Use external assessments and benchmarks to analyse the school's performance and target improvements.

## Progress since the last inspection

- There had been improvement in the attainment of students for whom Arabic was an additional language;
- Teachers had raised students' attainment and accelerated their progress in middle school mathematics;
- Senior leaders had ensured greater consistency in the quality of teaching in the middle school and the upper grades of the elementary school, but further improvement was needed, particularly in the Kindergarten and the early grades of the elementary school;
- Teachers had made some use of the US curriculum standards to evaluate students' progress and plan activities to meet their learning needs, but such plans were not yet fully implemented;
- The quality of teaching had improved in the middle school, and the quality of learning had improved in the middle and high schools, partly through more effective use of information technology by teachers.

## Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	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	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment was good in Islamic Education, in Arabic as a first language, and in mathematics in the middle school. It was acceptable in Arabic as an additional language, in English, in science, and in mathematics in phases other than the middle school. In Islamic Education, most students had a good understanding of prescribed worship and knowledge of the life of the Prophet, particularly in the middle school. Most students in Arabic as a first language had good listening skills. In Arabic as additional language, students' fluency and expression skills were broadly suitable for their age, though less so in the middle school. In English, listening and speaking skills were good. Skills in reading and writing were weaker. Too many students in the middle and high schools had difficulties in constructing complex sentences. In mathematics, students understood concepts such as equations, particularly in the middle school. In science, most students were attaining levels in line with US curriculum standards. As an example, those in the high school understood how atoms bond together to form molecules, while children in Kindergarten had appropriate knowledge of the life cycle of a frog.

Progress was good in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language. It varied between acceptable and good in the other key subjects. Links with real life helped students to make progress in Islamic Education. The majority of students made better than expected progress in Arabic as a first language. Progress through the grades was not always steady in Arabic as an additional language, although most students made the expected progress overall. In a few English lessons students made good progress in reading and writing, but not consistently across all grades. Students made broadly steady progress in mathematics, particularly in middle phase, where a majority made better than expected progress in problem solving. In science, progress for the majority of children in the Kindergarten was hampered by lessons that were over directed. Progress in the elementary and middle schools was acceptable. In the high school, where almost all students were well supported by peer and self-evaluation, progress in science was good. The progress of students with special educational needs was acceptable overall.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students' behaviour and attitudes toward learning were good in all phases. They were courteous and respectful toward each other and adults. They showed positive attitudes toward healthy living and physical fitness. For example, students were well aware of the importance of a healthy diet, and made proper choices. They diligently performed exercises in daily assemblies and in physical education lessons.

Attendance over the last full term was good, but a few students arrived late to school. The students' understanding of Islamic values and their effects was strong. Students' appreciation of contemporary society in Dubai and the Emirati heritage was well developed, as was knowledge of other cultures. These features were particularly strong in the middle and high schools. Teachers embedded work on environmental issues such as pollution into lessons regularly, and through this and other projects students had a well-developed understanding of the importance of conservation. They showed commitment to the community in a range of ways, including helping others less fortunate than themselves.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of teaching was good in the Kindergarten, middle and high schools. It was acceptable in the elementary school. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and planned their lessons well. Learning objectives were made clear to the students, although most lessons finished without an effective summary. Most teachers provided relevant and interesting tasks and activities. They ensured that students were supported when they experienced difficulties. In a few lessons teachers provided additional challenge for more able students but this was not a feature of most lessons. The majority of teachers used questions to provoke critical thinking and facilitate good quality discussion. Most teachers used resources, including information technology, effectively. The use of website programmes for homework supported learning well.

The quality of learning was good in the Kindergarten, middle and high schools. It was acceptable in the elementary grades. Students enjoyed their lessons and showed high levels of concentration. They engaged readily with new learning and willingly contributed to lessons. When given the opportunity, students worked collaboratively with their peers. They shared ideas and supported one another in group activities. As students progressed through school, they developed their reflective and analytical skills, particularly through Islamic Education. In a few classes in the middle and high schools, students were developing their enquiry and research skills through well-planned homework tasks. This was not a consistent feature of learning in most lessons. Most students could explain clearly and confidently what they had learned. They had awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. They were less clear about what they needed to do to improve their work.

Assessment of learning was acceptable across the school. Most teachers used questions effectively to evaluate students' understanding. They used a range of internally produced tests to gain an overview of students' knowledge. There was little use of external, standardised tests to confirm students' progress and attainment and to identify their next steps in learning. Teachers gave helpful oral comments to students as

they observed their work in classrooms. Written comments on students' workbooks were not detailed enough to help students understand how to improve. The self-assessment exercises given to students were not well planned. Assessment data was not used fully to improve curriculum, teaching and learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was good in all phases of the school. It was suitably aligned with the New York State Learning Standards in English, mathematics and science, and with Ministry of Education guidelines for Islamic Education and Arabic. It provided ample opportunities for student learning. The curriculum was suitably broad, with built in opportunities for progression. School leaders were developing further guidelines to help teachers to match their lessons and assessment approaches more closely with the standards. They were aware of the need to alter the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of students, especially the gifted and talented. The school provided an innovative suite of instructional software to enhance independent learning in English, mathematics, and science. Guided readers and more time for writing had been introduced in English lessons. The provision of Islamic Education and Arabic was a positive feature of the Kindergarten curriculum but structured play needed more emphasis at that stage. Extra-curricular activities and assemblies provided students with a rich range of learning opportunities, especially in relation to Islamic Education and Arabic.

[View judgements](#)

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

Procedures for ensuring the health and safety of students were outstanding. All policies and procedures were in place, including arrangements for the safe arrival and departure of buses. The school site was secure, the buildings well maintained and the facilities largely met the students' needs. There was a strong emphasis on health education, and sessions were provided, supplementary to the curriculum, to address this vital area of development. Supervision was excellent at all times. Incidents of anti-social behaviour were rare, but were consistently recorded and very effectively dealt with. All staff members were aware of the child protection policy, but some had not received suitable training.

The quality of support for all students was good. Staff and student relationships were very good and behaviour was well managed. Attendance was good and punctuality to lessons was outstanding. The policy for investigating absences did not fully meet current expectations. Staff members were working to

address late coming at the start of the day. Excellent medical, counselling and mentoring support was provided for all students.

[View judgements](#)

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

There was a basic policy for identifying and supporting students with special educational needs, but it did not encompass provision for the talented or gifted students. An independent specialist provider on site supported those with specific needs and added a valuable dimension to the education of all. In the best lessons, support for students with special needs ensured that they made progress in line with or better than their peers. Support in classes was not consistently strong in all cases.

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

Leadership was good overall. The Principal had a clear vision for the school, involving the full academic and personal development of students. This vision was promoted well through appropriate communication and a very good induction scheme for new teachers. A recently appointed Director of Curriculum had made a good start leading her area of responsibility, as had a new Vice-Principal. Together they formed a leadership team which was beginning to bring about improvements. Co-ordinators made good contributions to leadership. Opportunities for teachers to show leadership in school improvement groups were limited. Overall, the leaders showed the capacity to improve the school.

The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning was good. Staff members employed a wide range of approaches. The school action plan contained broadly appropriate tasks. The principal surveyed the views of teachers, students and parents regularly. The new Director of Curriculum had started a systematic programme of lesson observations. Test data was gathered for each student and class. Leaders did not analyse students' results fully to identify specific areas of strength or developmental needs. Professional development activities were, on the whole, appropriate. The school had made progress in addressing most of the recommendations of the previous inspection report.

Partnership with parents and the community was outstanding. A good number of parent volunteers helped in a range of activities, including helping students to gain reading skills. The Principal used a variety of ways to communicate with parents and involve them in their children's learning. Community links were

extensive and included visits to places of interest and visitors to the school. Partnership with a separate private special school in the building was mutually beneficial.

Governance of the school was good. Two parents' groups, one for activities and one for academic aspects, contributed to governance. The governors supported the school in a variety of ways and had helped to ensure an excellent learning environment. They also exercised accountability and took full responsibility for strategic planning.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources, was outstanding. The daily life of the school proceeded smoothly. The Principal executed procedures and routines well. Some aspects of the management of attendance and punctuality required further development. The Principal applied systematic procedures for appointing and inducting new teachers. The level of the teachers' qualifications was high. Around one-third of the teachers were new to the school, but they were settling in well. The well-maintained campus included a number of specialist areas, and the overall facilities and resources for learning were of high quality.

[View judgements](#)

## 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	36	10%
	Last year	39	12%
Teachers	21		50%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

Only a few parents responded to their survey and about half of the teachers responded to theirs. Most parents who responded were satisfied with the school and were positive about their children's progress in the key subjects. They thought that the school was well led and that leaders were responsive to their concerns. Teachers were less positive regarding these aspects. Parents were happy with communication between school and home, and thought that their children enjoyed school life and were safe, respected and valued. Only around half of the parents and teachers who responded reported that they were sufficiently involved in decision-making in the school.

## 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)



Copyright © 2013

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school.  
It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.