

INSPECTION REPORT

The Central School

Report published in January 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The Central School

Location	Al Nahda
Type of school	Private
Website	www.centralschool.net
Telephone	04-2674433
Address	PO Box 90697, Al Nahda 2, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Syed Rasul Syed Mirza Ghalib
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	2,789
Students' nationalities	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	8th October to 11th October 2012

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The context of the school

Located in Al Nahda, The Central School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to secondary, age three to 18 years. It was a member of the New Indian Modern Schools group of schools. The school ran two separate sessions: a morning session for mainly girls and the youngest students and an afternoon session for the boys from Grade 3 upwards.

The school followed the New Indian Modern Schools curriculum in Kindergarten, the National Council for Education and Research and Training syllabus (NCERT) until Grade 9 and then the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) examination syllabuses through to Grade 12.

At the time of the inspection there were 2,789 students. The majority were Indian and just over a quarter were from other Asian countries. There were no Emirati students. A little less than half of the student population was in the primary phase, while the secondary phase had about one sixth of all students. A good majority of the students were taught in the morning sessions. There were 131 qualified teachers and two teaching assistants. There were 75 students identified with a special educational need who were supported by two counsellors.

The school had just completed and furnished an extension of its buildings. This provided a further 18 classrooms, two computer rooms, new play and sports areas and a few other specialist facilities. The school was awaiting approval from the Dubai municipality to use these facilities. Enrolment this year had increased by 335 students and a further 216 students would be admitted once building approvals had been received. Additional enrolments had resulted in large class sizes throughout the school.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Students' understanding of Islamic values were outstanding and students' progress in Islamic Education was good throughout the school;
- Students demonstrated very positive attitudes to learning;
- The school's partnership with parents was good.

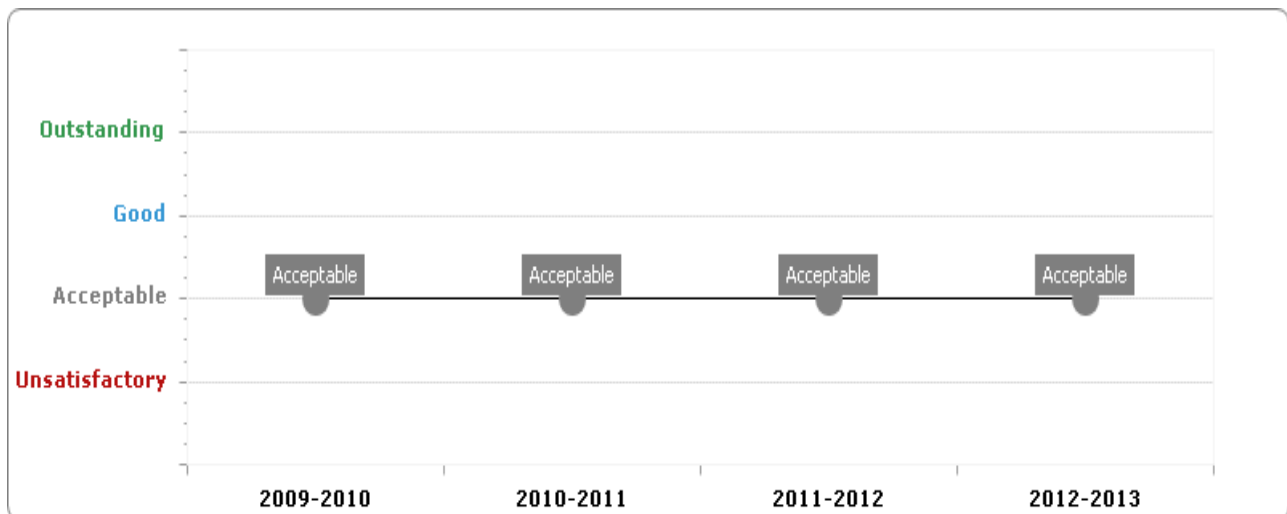
Recommendations

- Ensure that students are more actively engaged in better resourced lessons, and that their individual learning needs are fully met, particularly in Kindergarten;
- Immediately eliminate the use of corporal punishment and review all health and safety procedures and practices throughout the school including transportation and class sizes;
- Improve the identification and provision of students with special educational needs;
- Improve school leaders understanding of self-evaluation, including the better use of available data.

Progress since the last inspection

- Attainment and progress in mathematics had improved in Kindergarten and Islamic Education had improved in the primary phase;
- The students promoted and followed healthy diets while at school;
- There was improved awareness of and planning for, good quality lessons, including clear learning outcomes;
- Staff had reviewed the Kindergarten curriculum but there remained insufficient attention to developing its breadth and balance.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Across all of the school, students' attainment was at least acceptable. In Islamic Education the majority of students attained good standards in Seerah, knowledge, Feqh understanding and skills in recitation. In Arabic, most students across the school displayed age-appropriate levels of listening, speaking, and reading. Most were less secure in unfamiliar tasks and in writing skills. In English, attainment was acceptable across the school. Most students had good speaking skills. A majority could express opinions confidently from Grade 8 onwards. Reading for meaning was a weakness for the majority of students in primary phase. By the end of Grade 12, more able students could write for different purposes but there were limited examples of extended and creative writing. In mathematics, attainment had improved in Kindergarten to good. It was acceptable across primary, middle and secondary. In Kindergarten, children understood the order of sequence of numbers from zero to 50 and the concept of 'before' and 'after' in number work. Calculation skills were developed well across the school and students could apply these to other areas of the subject at the expected level. Attainment was acceptable in science across the school. Students' factual knowledge and ability to define were sound, but there were insufficient levels of investigative and research skills.

Progress was at least acceptable across the school in all key subjects. In Islamic Education, progress was good across the school. In Arabic, progress across the school was acceptable, except in writing. Most students made gains in their overall language skills in line with expectation. Boys were making less progress in speaking and writing skills. Students' progress in English was good in Kindergarten, where children entered the school with weak skills in English. Progress was acceptable across the rest of the school. Slower progress was made by the majority of primary students but those from Grade 8 onwards made expected gains in speaking and presentation skills. In mathematics, good progress was made in Kindergarten, while in primary and middle phases it was acceptable. There was better development of investigative and critical thinking skills in the secondary phase where students made good progress. Progress in science was acceptable in all the phases. It was not better because students lacked sufficient application skills and did not infer from observations well enough.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of students across the school were good. Students had positive attitudes towards teachers, peers and their learning and responded positively to adults. Relationships between students of different nationalities were positive. Secondary students collaborated well to conduct important events of the school. They willingly took on responsibilities, helped the school with supervision and contributed well to committees. Students were aware of health issues and healthy lifestyles and had improved the diet they followed in school. Attendance was acceptable. Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness was good across the school. In the secondary phase, students had an excellent understanding of how Islamic values influenced contemporary society. They appreciated the heritage and culture of the UAE to a lesser extent, but held celebrations and observed National Day. Students appreciated their own culture as well as the variety and range of other cultures from around the world, which were supported by , displays and celebrations at the school. Students' community and environmental responsibility were also good. Most students felt confident in sharing their ideas and their students' council voice was influential. Senior students understood the importance of protecting the environment at the local and regional levels. Students actively participated in several distinctive initiatives and projects related to environmental sustainability. They understood the value of involvement in the community and participated in the planting of UAE native trees, using waste water from air-conditioning units, holding 'no plastic days' and a World Environment Day.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable overall. In all phases, teachers planned for lessons and shared the learning objectives with students. Most teachers in the secondary phase knew their subjects well. Teachers made use of questioning at the start of lessons and this engaged students and helped consolidate their previous learning and understanding. However, teachers often talked for too much of the lesson thus limiting student interactions and progress. Teachers offered a limited range of activities to meet the needs of all groups of students. Where teaching was good, learning was linked to students' own experiences and engaged them actively. Students' independence and their critical thinking skills were underdeveloped. In Kindergarten, teaching approaches were inconsistent and did not always reflect practice such as learning through purposeful play.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable across all phases. Students were enthusiastic, committed to their learning and participated positively in class. In a few lessons, notably in the secondary phase, students took responsibility and were able to lead the learning. They demonstrated confidently what they had learned and were keen to improve. On too many occasions however, students were passive, listening to the teacher and responding. They worked with concentration for short periods on their own or in small

groups. However, they had insufficient opportunities to find things out for themselves in class or participate in meaningful, active learning experiences, particularly in the Kindergarten. This, in turn, limited the development of enquiry, research and critical thinking skills.

Assessment was acceptable in all phases of the school. Teachers used a number of different assessments. Teachers had some knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. In class they assessed through questioning and observation and gave oral feedback. Teachers' questioning was inconsistent. A number of teachers only used closed questioning. Students from Grade 9 onwards had regular opportunities for productive peer and self-assessment. Assessment records were kept but data was not used constructively for lesson planning to support individual learning needs, nor to track students' progress and provide them with appropriate advice. Feedback on written work was minimal and did not provide the next steps for learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school's curriculum was acceptable across the school. The curriculum in Kindergarten was broad and balanced and included regular art and craft subjects. The curriculum for Islamic Education was good across the school and had effective links with other subjects. The curriculum reflected the CBSE guidelines and was regularly reviewed and updated. There were adequate transition arrangements between phases. The school offered five languages: Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Bengali and Urdu which enhanced the language skills of students. The curriculum for English in the middle and secondary schools offered students scope for developing creativity and independence. Although cross-curricular links were planned, they were not evident in lessons. Opportunities for the development of critical thinking, problem solving skills and independent learning were found in mathematics and science, but were limited. There were too few enrichment activities that supported students' learning, and extra-curricular activities and community links contributed to learning or personal development to a small extent.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were unsatisfactory. No staff training was provided in child protection matters. Corporal punishment was observed during the inspection. The procedures for transport and the dismissal of students involved significant safety risks and medicines were inappropriately stored. Personal identity cards were not issued as required. While the school environment was reasonably well maintained it was only partially secure. Records confirmed that fire drills had taken

place and evacuation procedure implemented. The school shop served some healthy lunches but the physical education classes were limited due to the unsuitability of facilities.

The quality of support was acceptable. Management and procedures for monitoring and following-up attendance and punctuality of students were good. Staff relationships with students were respectful and most staff managed behaviour effectively. Career guidance was acceptable and included monthly lessons by supervisors on career education, visits by speakers from universities and library access for students to network resources. Systems for monitoring the well-being and personal development of all students were acceptable but information gained was not used to respond to students' individual needs with appropriate advice and guidance.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school had made limited progress addressing the recommendations from the previous DSIB inspection report and provision for students with special educational needs remained in the early stages of development. Procedures for identifying students with special educational needs remained weak. Specialists were not employed. Support was managed appropriately by two counsellors, and they shared information with class and subject teachers. However, there was no staff member responsible for the development of identification and provision measures. The school had started the recruitment process for appointing a specialist teacher.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership of the school was acceptable. The Principal had a high profile and provided clear direction and accountability for staff and students. The Headmistress and Headmaster complemented him well and through good team work at different levels, ensured that teachers focused on improving their teaching to raise standards. Professional development had improved and good teaching, when identified, was shared and modelled regularly. However, there was still some variation in the quality of leadership across the school. In a few areas more effective strategies were needed.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable and involved all main groups of stakeholders. There was an improved and systematic approach to monitoring teaching and the performance of students. Performance management set improvement targets and provided good support where necessary. Older students' regular reviews of their own teachers had led to improvements. School improvement planning included success criteria. The school had made limited progress in meeting the recommendations from the

previous inspection report. There was progress in some aspects of teaching and subject leaders' understanding of a good lesson. However, a clear understanding of good quality self-evaluation was still needed. The school's ability to make further improvements was limited by its inability to make best use of the available data.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents were very supportive of the school. They felt communication with the school was effective. They felt welcome in the school. Their issues were resolved effectively. The Parents' Association was active in school activities and fundraising. Regular school reports gave parents a clear picture of their child's attainment and progress. However, parents were not active in key decision-making processes. There were not strong enough links with the community.

Governance was acceptable. Strategic direction was provided by the Advisory Council through the owner's representative and included the goal of becoming an outstanding school. The council reviewed the school's performance and other main aspects.. However, the school was non-compliant with regulations on class sizes at every grade level, the use of corporal punishment, transport and storage safety. The school benefited from its involvement in the corporate group but common policies in the group had prevented some curriculum improvements being made. Parents were consulted by the council, but had little direct influence on decision-making.

The management of the school was acceptable and the day-to-day running of the school was smooth. The school website was beginning to be used to set and distribute homework, and SMS was used to contact parents. Teachers had university qualifications but a minority had no formal teaching qualifications. Furniture, wall displays and some fittings were in need of repair and replacement. There was some overcrowding in a minority of classes. Regulation limits had been exceeded. The imminent use of the new building extension was expected to resolve this problem and improve the available facilities. There were insufficient teaching and learning resources such as information and communications technology resources, modern library books and textbooks to support learning in the key subject areas.

[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	488	33%
	Last year	426	33%
Teachers	72		55%
Students	188		35%

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

About a third of parents responded to the survey which was similar to last year. Over half the teachers as well as more than a third of senior students also responded to their surveys. Most parents believed that their children were making good progress in all the key subjects, except in Arabic as a second language where only a majority thought this. Senior students had similar views, but only a majority believed that they made good progress in mathematics and science. Most parents were generally satisfied with the quality of education the school provided, believed that the school was well-led, that the principal was approachable and listened to their concerns. A minority of parents and students felt that they were involved in the school's decision-making. They did not feel that students made use of a wide range of technology to support learning. Students submitted a range of comments that indicated dissatisfaction with poor hygiene of the toilets, lack of extra-curricular activities and problems relating to the two shift system. Teachers who responded were supportive of the school in all aspects of its performance. However, a minority disagreed that the school welcomed or accurately identified needs of children with a special educational need. A minority also felt that they were not 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

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