

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Deira Private School

Report published in April 2013

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Deira Private School

Location	Al Twar 3
Type of school	Private
Website	www.deps-sch.ae
Telephone	04-264-1595
Address	PO. Box 231959, Dubai
Principal	Sharyn Ann Grieve
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-11 / Foundation Stage to Year 6
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	171
Largest nationality group of Students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	55 (32%)
Dates of the inspection	10th to 12th December 2012

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## The context of the school

Located in Al Twar, Deira Private School provided education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to primary, ages four to 11 years. The school had significantly increased its enrolment (from 111 to 171) since the last inspection. Most of the new children had joined Foundation Stage. About 32 per cent of the students were Emiratis. There were four classes in Foundation Stage and 10 classes in the primary phase. The school had identified about 25 per cent of students as having some type of special educational need (SEN) requiring support.

The school follows the English National Curriculum using the Cambridge International Primary Programme.

There were 22 full-time teachers, including the Principal. There were six new teachers on staff, five who taught in the primary phase. Teachers had a range of academic and teaching qualifications and most were suitably qualified for the subjects and age groups that they were teaching. They were supported by a number of teaching assistants. There were five shadow teachers who supported students with special educational needs.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- The overall good attainment in English, mathematics and science;
- The good attitudes and behaviour of students;
- The good teaching, learning and assessment in Foundation Stage;
- The well balanced curriculum, which offered students an extensive range of extra-curricular activities;
- The good support for students with special educational needs.

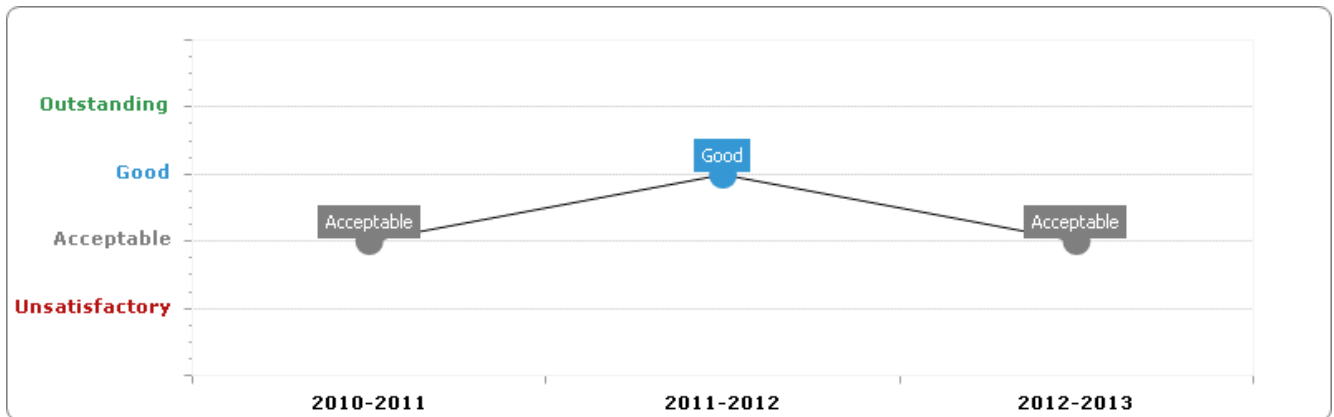
### Recommendations

- Plan lessons that include active learning opportunities and that match the UK National Curriculum level descriptors;
- Improve the assessment of learning using UK National Curriculum level descriptors to involve students in identifying their strengths and weaknesses;
- Use assessment information to identify trends in students' performance and adjust the school's improvement plans accordingly.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Learning in Foundation Stage had improved to good;
- The time for learning Arabic as a first language was compliant with Ministry of Education regulations;
- The quality of teaching in the primary classes was acceptable and, consequently, progress in a majority of key areas of learning was also acceptable at this phase of the school;
- There was regular and effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons;
- Governance of the school had improved to good.

## Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Good	Acceptable
Assessment	Good	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	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	Acceptable
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 most key subjects varied. Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable; most students attained levels that were in line with curriculum expectations. Most students demonstrated strong links between what they learnt and everyday life. Students' attainment was acceptable in Arabic as a first language. Almost all students' listening skills were well developed and most students responded well to questioning. Students' speaking, reading, and writing skills were less developed. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was acceptable. The majority of students were able to read simple paragraphs but writing skills were less developed. Attainment in Foundation Stage English was good. Most children blended letters together to make three and four lettered words which they could read. They wrote their names and used computers to improve their skills and add to their knowledge. Despite variable primary teaching practices, attainment was good overall. The oldest students showed good listening skills; they answered questions confidently and most could read information with good understanding. They followed written instructions accurately while writing in different styles. Elsewhere in the primary phase, attainment was not as good. In mathematics, attainment was good, with number, counting and calculations a strength. Shape, space and measure were good but the application of mathematical knowledge to solve problems was less well developed. Attainment in science was good. Younger children investigated the five senses and identified sweet, sour, cold and warm tastes. Lower primary students identified incisor and molar teeth and older students investigated different liquid solutions and dissolved substances.

Progress in Islamic Education was acceptable. Most students could recite The Holy Qur'an and most made strong connections with everyday life and other learning. In Arabic as a first language, most students made acceptable progress in the four aspects of language development. In Arabic as an additional language progress was good in the older classes, where most students developed good listening, speaking, and reading skills. However, writing progress was weaker. Progress in English was good in the Foundation Stage because the children were taught well in most lessons. In the primary years, progress was acceptable, particularly as students moved through Years 1 to 4. Progress was better in Years 5 and 6. Most primary students made acceptable progress in number operations and mental arithmetic. In early years, most children made good progress in number and calculations and created simple repeating patterns. Their knowledge of multiplication facts was developing well. The ability to solve open-ended problems and investigate numbers was less well-developed. Students made good progress adding to their scientific knowledge. Their investigative skills were less well developed because of the limited opportunities to experiment.

[View judgements](#)

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

Emirati students' attainment and progress was acceptable overall. Progress and learning were good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary phase. Most students began school with low levels of English, but their ability in other subjects was similar. Their progress through the school was generally acceptable. It was stronger in English, and also in Islamic Education. Attendance was acceptable. Engagement in lessons and homework was acceptable in all phases. Reports to parents of lower phase students were informative and accurate but, in the primary phase, they did not accurately reflect the students' attainment levels. Increased numbers of Emirati parents were involved in their children's education in the Foundation Stage compared to a year earlier.

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

Students' attitudes and behaviour were generally good, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Students usually behaved well in lessons and when they moved around the school. However, when primary classes were not well managed, some students' lack of self-discipline led to behaviour that was not good. The Healthy Lifestyle committee had worked hard to ensure that students developed sensible and mature attitudes to healthy lifestyles. Attendance over the last full term was acceptable overall. Students' understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and their cultural awareness were good. Most students displayed appropriate levels of understanding of and appreciation for Islam. They demonstrated these values well in their everyday lives. Older students could explain the relevance and impact of these values on society in Dubai. Students' appreciation of the culture and traditions of UAE were well developed throughout the school. Most students understood their own cultures and celebrated them from time to time. They were aware of the cultural diversity and breadth of nationalities of classmates from around the world. Students' community and environmental responsibility was good. Students across the school carried out social responsibilities to the best of their abilities. Most students felt confident in sharing their ideas and the students' voices were beginning to be influential. Most students understood the importance of protecting the environment at the local, national and global levels. They took care of their school environment through planting flowers and plants and keeping the campus litter-free. Student projects supporting conservation and sustainability were less developed.

[View judgements](#)

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

Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in primary. Good planning with shared learning objectives supported effective delivery of lessons in the Foundation Stage but this was less evident in the primary years. Different strategies to meet the range of students' needs in primary lessons were rare. Some primary teachers did not have a deep understanding of the National Curriculum attainment levels. In the Foundation Stage activities were integrated with other aspects of the curriculum and lessons provided opportunities for independent learning. Most primary teaching was too teacher-centered and this limited students' progress. This also limited opportunities for primary students to discuss and evaluate their learning. The teaching of English in upper primary was a strength, however there was scope for considerable improvement in primary phase teaching. Questioning of students did not sufficiently promote the development of their higher order thinking skills.

The quality of students' learning was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary years. The early years learning environment was appropriately child-centred. This promoted good interaction amongst children in both group and paired work. In a few lessons in the primary phase the use of plenary sessions was effective for allowing students to reflect upon what had been learnt. The best learning was observed when students were actively engaged in well planned activities and learning resources were used well. Scope existed to develop clearer cross-curricular links between subjects, particularly in order to improve and extend literacy skills.

The assessment of learning was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary phase. Students' achievements were regularly assessed and school leaders analysed results to identify trends and adapt the curriculum. In the Foundation Stage, assessment involved ongoing focused observations of children as they worked so that their progress over time was monitored. Teachers usually used this information well to plan next steps in learning. In the primary phase assessment was used to indicate what students had learnt over time but teachers did not have a clear enough understanding of the assessment levels in the curriculum. Whilst they knew their students' strengths and weaknesses, they did not consistently use this information to plan lessons to ensure good progress. The best teachers provided constructive feedback to students so that they knew how to improve their work. Although most teachers supported students in evaluating what they had learnt at the end of lessons, this information was rarely used well to plan subsequent lessons.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was good in both phases and offered a broad range of subjects. Children in Foundation Stage learned mainly through a practical and multi-sensory approach and had increasing opportunities to choose activities to develop their independence. The primary curriculum was planned to ensure continuity from year to year and students were generally well-prepared for the next phase. Students developed their personal and social skills through Circle Time and citizenship lessons. The extent to which the curriculum was stimulating varied from class to class. However, students appreciated the choice of a significant number of activities after school. There were many visitors, guest speakers, projects and trips to places of interest which enriched learning and enhanced students' understanding of Dubai as a community. The curriculum was regularly reviewed and the new research centre had provided more opportunities for independent student research.

[View judgements](#)

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

Health and safety provision at the school was outstanding. Very thorough systems and procedures were in place which ensured that students worked and played in an extremely safe and secure environment. The clinic was hygienic and medicines were locked away safely. Fire drills were arranged regularly but were not well documented. Arrangements for those who travelled to school on buses were very secure, as were those for students who were dropped off by cars. Throughout the school, adults provided excellent supervision to ensure students' health and safety at all times. The importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle was a strength of the school. Weekly opportunities were organised when students took part in discussions about health and safety issues. Each term, 'Healthy Week' topics reinforced and developed understanding further. All staff members received very detailed, regular training in relation to the care and welfare of students, including child protection.

Staff members knew students well and were able to focus effectively on their personal needs. Relationships between teachers and students were generally very good. Students with problems were confident to ask for help or support. Behaviour was usually good and managed well, but teachers did not always manage challenging behaviour effectively. There were good systems for identifying students with special educational needs. Shadow teachers supported a number of students throughout the school. The counsellor provided additional support to the majority of students with special educational needs outside the classroom. Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality had been improved.

[View judgements](#)

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

The special needs co-ordinator had developed systems which allow teachers to identify and then refer students causing concern or who are finding learning difficult. Students of all ages received additional support from shadow teachers paid for by their parents. A few others were supported by the school course'lor, but when being tutored in English and mathematics they missed lessons in Arabic, history and geography.

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

The overall leadership of the school was good. The Principal and her leadership team had agreed a detailed action plan that identified priorities for improvement. Good progress had been made to improve attainment and learning in Foundation Stage, support for students with special educational needs and the monitoring of attendance. In the primary phase there had been limited success in improving students' learning. Leaders had high expectations but they were not realised in primary students' learning outcomes. Subject leadership in the Foundation Stage had been successful in raising children's attainment in English and mathematics. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the primary phase was not so robust, resulting in only acceptable teaching and student progress.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning were of acceptable quality. Leaders had established appropriate self-assessment procedures. Analysis of attainment and progress data had improved with the introduction of more standardised testing. Senior leaders were aware of the majority of the school's strengths and the weaknesses, such as the quality of primary learning. The evaluation of primary teaching, however, by subject leaders was inconsistent. It had not focused on active learning by primary students. Planning was not sufficiently linked to the specified learning outcomes in the curriculum. Development plans were detailed and comprehensive, and had been instrumental in bringing about positive changes. The school had made progress in addressing most of the recommendations from the last report.

Partnership with parents and the community was good. Parents were involved in the school through the Advisory Council and the Parents' Association, but not all parents were aware of the Advisory Council. A few supported the school in a variety of ways that included fund-raising, hearing children read and special events. Parents appreciated the approachability of the leaders and the clear information about their children's progress in report cards. Good links were in place with community organisations including, for example, a

wildlife rescue centre and a primary school in Kenya. Links with local businesses and other schools were less well developed.

Governance of the school was good. The board of governors provided good direction and ensured that most decisions were referenced to the needs of students. They were good at holding the school to account for improvements. Governors met on a regular basis and there was a designated governor who worked very closely with school leaders. This supported a clear understanding of the priorities for improvement. Governors routinely sought the views of stakeholders, but they did not always respond to them effectively. The board had improved its representation by increasing parental involvement.

Management was good in both phases. Clear expectations and well-rehearsed routines ensured that the school ran smoothly and efficiently. Teachers, including some specialists, were suitably qualified. The effectiveness of learning support efforts was varied. Professional development opportunities were provided to further improve teachers' skills. The campus was spacious, well-maintained and accessible to all students on the ground floor. High quality resources were plentiful, especially in the Foundation Stage.

[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	74	62%
	Last year	50	60%
Teachers	21		91%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

A majority of parents responded to the survey. Most agreed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects. Most thought that their children enjoyed school and were safe there, and that students' behaviour was good. Almost all parents indicated that the school was well led. A majority of parents agreed that their children were getting the education they expected from the school. Most agreed that students could choose from a wide range of extra - curricular activities. Almost all teachers responded to their survey. Almost all agreed that the school welcomed children with special educational needs. One third reported that they were not involved in school decision-making and almost all agreed that students used a wide range of technology to support learning. Teachers were positive in their views about the other major aspects of provision at 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)

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