

INSPECTION REPORT

The Indian High School-Branch

Report published in February 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The Indian High School-Branch

Location	Al Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Website	www.indianhighschooldubai.org
Telephone	04-2823555
Address	P.O.Box:106 AL GARHOUD Dubai U.A.E
Principal	GITA PABREJA
Curriculum	Indian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-9 / KG 1- Grade 4
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	4262
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	6th October to 10th October

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The context of the school

The Indian High School – Branch in Al Garhoud is a private school which provides education for girls and boys from Kindergarten to Grade 4, ages three to nine years. It is associated with the Indian High School, which takes students from Grade 5 onwards.

At the time of the inspection, there were 4,262 students on roll. The school follows the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum and was implementing the new CBSE-International curriculum. All but a very small number of students were of Indian nationality. No Emirati students were enrolled in the school. At the time of the inspection, the principal was absent due to illness and the school was being led by the headmistress.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- Students' outstanding behaviour and positive attitudes made a valuable contribution to their academic progress, particularly in English and mathematics;
- The level of challenge in English, mathematics and science increased significantly as students moved through the school so that, by Year 4, expectations were higher than those of similar schools internationally;
- Students' welfare was a high priority;
- Strong and effective leadership was successfully embedding ambition and driving improvements;
- Adults and students felt valued and parents greatly appreciated the happy, harmonious and purposeful community.

Recommendations

- Improve the progress of students in Arabic as an additional language through raising the level of challenge and providing students with active and engaging tasks;
- Ensure that the information generated by assessment is used to enable:
 - a) teachers to match work to what students have shown they can do,
 - b) students to know what they need to do to improve;
- Provide more resources to enable students to work independently and cooperatively, and allow teachers to provide more focused challenge and support for individuals and groups.

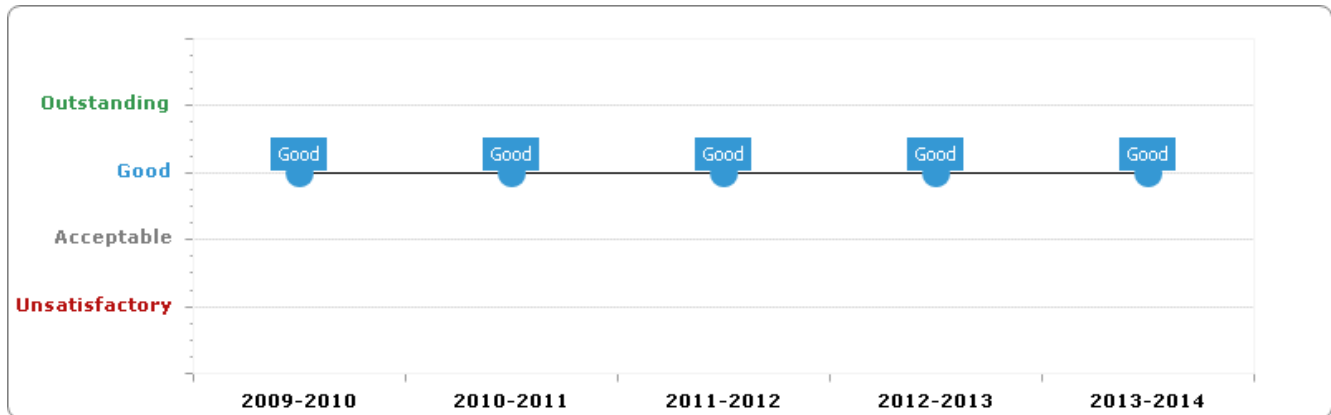
Progress since the last inspection

Very good efforts had been made to implement the recommendations of the previous inspection.

- The promotion of students' enquiry skills was evident in the increased number of occasions where students decided independently how to tackle scientific investigations. There had been less success in modifying teaching methods in Arabic as an additional language and students' progress had lost pace.
- In order to promote students' critical thinking skills, enrichment booklets including relevant questions had been introduced in English, mathematics and science.
- Students had responded well to opportunities to express their own ideas, although there was a tendency for some students and teachers to think there was a 'right answer' to some open ended questions.

The school had made good progress in its provision for students with special educational needs. Dedicated teachers in the special educational needs department continued to provide effective support for individual students but they had less impact on the provision during day-to-day lessons.

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

	KG	Primary
Quality of students' learning skills	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	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	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

In Islamic Education, the majority of students had good skills in Qur'an recitation. They also had a good understanding of Seerah and major Islamic concepts and conduct. In Arabic as an additional language, most students' listening, responding skills and speaking skills were in line with expectations. However, most of what they spoke was recall of memorised text. Writing was the least developed skill. In Kindergarten, children's attainment in English and mathematics was outstanding. Children listened effectively to instructions, spoke well, and had a basic knowledge of letter sounds, which they used to read simple text. Early writing was not as well developed. Children had secure number skills and were aware of the names and properties of shapes. They attained well in learning basic scientific facts, such as how plants grow from seeds, but their early scientific skills, including observation, recording and predicting were less well developed. The attainment of primary students in English and mathematics was outstanding. Students spoke confidently, read with fluency and expression and wrote well presented, grammatically accurate accounts. They developed considerable skill in calculating and applying their mathematical knowledge to solve real-life problems. Attainment in primary science was good. Students' knowledge of facts and processes, such as photosynthesis, was good. Their investigative skills, including experimenting, hypothesising and drawing conclusions, were developing well.

In Islamic Education, students made good progress in developing their Qur'an recitation skills and their understanding of Islamic concepts and laws. Their interpretation skills of the Qur'anic verses and the prophet's Hadith were slower to develop. In Arabic as an additional language, students' progress in listening, speaking, vocabulary, oral reading and handwriting was better than that in reading comprehension and extended writing though progress was acceptable overall. In Kindergarten, children made outstanding progress in English and mathematics particularly in their speaking, listening and early reading skills. Their confidence as speakers grew rapidly, especially considering their starting points. Children quickly built on their initial counting skills and learned how to do simple calculations. Children's progress in developing scientific skills in the Kindergarten was slower than their acquisition of facts. Primary students made outstanding progress in reading increasingly challenging material and their writing became more technically accurate, with their increasing vocabulary. Students' mathematical and scientific knowledge and understanding developed well and their problem solving and enquiry skills accelerated as they moved through the school.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Students' learning skills were good across the school. Students enjoyed learning and responded well to most lessons. Their awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as learners grew as they passed through the primary phase, but sometimes they lacked guidance to identify the next steps in their learning. Opportunities such as lesson summaries gave students the chance to demonstrate their understanding, but this was not always included. Students had frequent chances to give feedback to their peers and most did this well, speaking clearly and purposefully. When asked to collaborate, most students responded well, being used to sharing ideas and supporting each other, but some groups found it hard to allocate roles between themselves or to share the tasks. Through the school's focus on establishing cross-curricular links in the key subjects, students were becoming used to using what they knew in one subject to develop their understanding in another. The students' use of information technology, other than for homework or sessions in the ICT lab, was too often limited to viewing the lesson's video resources and operating the interactive white board. Students showed themselves willing and curious to attempt questions requiring critical thinking, but opportunities for them to do this were inconsistent.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development was outstanding. Students were self-disciplined and self-reliant. They responded very well to adults and others confidently. They showed initiative and were responsible members of the school community. Many had leadership roles within the school, assisting in the responsibility for key areas, for example, as 'behaviour monitors' on the buses, hallways, and in the playground. Others had key roles on the student council working to improve the school, and shared their ideas with the leadership team. Students had strong commitment to environmental conservation. They had an excellent understanding of the wider world and took pride in the UAE culture. They had well developed understanding of the importance of Islamic values and tradition in Dubai and had excellent awareness and appreciation of their own culture. They delighted in celebrating Emirati culture, as evident during an excellent assembly where students in Emirati dress performed traditional songs and dances and dramatised the Haj pilgrimage. They gained an excellent knowledge and were appreciative of contemporary life in Dubai, and its heritage and culture. They gained a secure understanding of global citizenship. Students had an excellent understanding of healthy living. They made wise choices about their own health and fitness. Students also displayed an excellent work ethic. Attendance and punctuality were outstanding.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was good across the school and most teachers were knowledgeable in their subjects. This enabled them to set clear objectives in their lesson plans and to ask searching questions of students to check their understanding. In many lessons teachers ensured that there were varied activities to maintain students' interest and engagement, successfully utilising their enthusiasm for learning. Teachers established warm and respectful relationships with their students, promoting their confidence to seek clarification or to offer responses. In the most successful lessons, teachers gave the classes more responsibility for their learning by organising discussions and group tasks which required collaboration. A few teachers found this hard to do and tightly directed whole lessons. This had the effect of limiting students' opportunities to find things out for themselves. Most teachers set appropriately challenging expectations for their students, but there were examples of classes undertaking activities that were too easy, particularly for higher attaining students. There was evidence of the school's drive to increase the part played by students in their own learning, with effective strategies in many lessons, but practice remained inconsistent in this area.

The quality of assessment was good across the school. There were widespread systems for tracking the progress made by all students and cohorts and this information was effectively shared with parents through the Student Attainment Tracker. There was increased use of self-assessment by students, and teachers regularly took the opportunity to encourage them to consider the quality of one another's work. Marking of students' work was frequent but comments did not always give enough specific guidance on how to improve. Whilst systems were geared to generating progress data, they were largely internally based as opposed to using externally validated testing. This was particularly the case in Arabic, where internal assessments were less useful for setting specific learning targets for individual students.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was outstanding in both phases with a clear rationale. The school offered a broad, well-balanced curriculum with clear progression. Prior learning experience, along with the views of staff, parents and students were taken into account when reviewing and planning the curriculum. Students benefited from well-organised arrangements to ensure smooth transition as they moved from one phase to the next. This had resulted, for example, in improvements in the key subjects. Cross-curricular links were incorporated in daily plans and implemented effectively in some classes. Such links and the use of real-life contexts were particularly strong in Islamic Education and mathematics. The school had made good progress in improving the use of modern technology to enhance independent learning

skills. Students were involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. In addition to sport and the arts, others were engaged in supporting good causes which included fund raising for the F1 club, and local charities. Such activities promoted students' academic development and contributed to their senses of sharing and responsibility.

The curriculum design to meet the needs of different groups of learners was good in both the phases. School leaders had modified curriculum plans skilfully to support various learning groups, including students with special education needs. Study programmes and lesson plans had a variety of activities to meet different abilities and needs. However, the implementation of these modified plans in lessons was inconsistent.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school had very thorough systems for ensuring students' health and safety. Record keeping across these areas was outstanding. Healthy living was systematically promoted in all aspects of school life. Buildings and equipment were scrupulously maintained and in excellent condition. The care and welfare of students, including child protection, were excellent and close supervision of students prevailed at all times. The majority of students took the bus to school and outstanding support was given to them as they arrived and departed. Five minute lapses between grades for boarding the buses made this a highly efficient procedure. Students had assigned seats. Attendants and student behaviour monitors were present on the buses to ensure safety. The school consistently provided a fully safe, hygienic and secure environment for students and staff. Excellent supervision of students prevailed at all times.

The quality of support for students was good in both phases. Respectful and trusting relationships were evident throughout the school, children and the support staff. There were effective procedures to deal with incidents of poor behaviour, underpinned by clear behaviour and child protection policies. Students' attendance and punctuality were closely monitored. The school had considerably improved the quality of support since the last inspection. There were better mechanisms for identifying students with special educational needs, for modifying the curriculum and tracking their progress. These students received high quality support outside the classroom although the support they received during day-to-day lessons was inconsistent. Similarly, the support provided for gifted and talented students was variable, which meant they were sometimes given tasks which were not challenging enough.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was outstanding. The school had a very clear vision and explicit aims that drove the ethos and direction of the school. Staff were very supportive of one another and relationships across the school were excellent. Innovation was encouraged and middle managers felt empowered and supported. All leaders were perceptive and had high expectations of staff and students. Relationships across the leadership team were excellent. Well-established communication systems helped the school to run very smoothly. There was a strong capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation was good. The key priorities for improvement were informed by a combination of school self-evaluation and the recommendations of inspections. Regular observations of lessons by middle managers were used to share good practice and provide further training. For example, in Kindergarten, staff benefited from a video taken in a colleague's classroom illustrating how a classroom could be organised to promote independent learning skills. Sometimes, however, monitoring visits focussed on what teachers were doing rather than the quality of the students' learning. Leaders consulted assessment data to gain a view of students' attainment but information about progress lacked clarity and limited their overview of the effectiveness of the teaching. The recommendations in the previous report had been embraced fully, with some clear improvements evident, for example, the introduction of enrichment activities to promote students' critical thinking. The school development plan provided a clear path for improvement and was reviewed regularly throughout the year.

Relationships with parents and the local and wider community were outstanding. Parents were able to express their views through regular meetings of the Parent Focus Group, during which school leaders shared their strategic plans and invited parents to comment on them. The school ensured that parents were well informed about their children's progress. Staff communicated information in a variety of ways, including a dedicated internet portal, email and blogs. The school enjoyed a productive relationship with local businesses. For example, specialists readily volunteered to provide advice when the school was planning changes to the premises and grounds. The strong partnership with local institutions included mutually beneficial relationships with a nearby school for students with learning difficulties. These students were warmly welcomed and took part in joint projects. For example, students from both schools contributed to a large 'friendship mural' painted on a perimeter wall.

Governance was outstanding. Parents and teachers were represented on the governing board and a parents' focus group provided a means for their views to be heard. Governors considered these carefully. For example, a supervised area for students awaiting collection by their parents had been established.

There was clear structure for decision making, including an executive committee that closely monitored the school's performance. The chairman played a strong part in driving innovations and improvements.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources was good overall. A highly committed and proactive management team provided excellent day-to-day organisation. Staff were effectively deployed and almost all were well qualified. There was a good range of teacher training and much of this was provided in the school. However, the training had not yet had significant impact upon practice. The hallways were filled with outstanding student displays and information, particularly in the primary section. However, the classroom learning environment was not always conducive to supporting collaborative learning, due to the large number of students in many of the rooms. The school had a limited range of specialist resource areas, including computer rooms and a science lab. Kindergarten children benefited from practical play areas but most of the classrooms lacked sufficient resources for teachers to promote children's independent learning skills successfully.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school had made a good progress on this aspect since last inspection. There was a high demand for places and the school had devised a system for admission which demonstrated a commitment to admit all the children without initially refusing entry because of any specific difficulties. Individual education plans were created by specialist staff, including some precise guidance. Teachers were aware of the students with special educational needs in the classes and there had been training in supporting them. There were inconsistencies, however, in the teachers' knowledge of students' precise needs and how to ensure they were supported effectively in lessons.

The school had taken initiative for creating awareness among parents of how to support their children at home. Parents were invited to attend meetings once a term where school counsellors provided ideas and responded to parents' questions. Co-ordinators had been appointed to monitor and track the progress of students with special educational needs. The detailed records indicated that students made good progress in the key subjects.

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	1678	42%
	Last year	2159	57%
Teachers	182		61%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

The following statements were based on the survey response at the time of the inspection. The above response figures are the most up-to-date and accurate available prior to publication.

Parents and teachers were very positive in their views of the school. Almost all parents were satisfied that the school gave a good quality of education. They felt that their children made good progress in English, mathematics and science and thought highly of their behaviour. The majority felt that the school welcomed students with special educational needs and most thought these students were monitored well. Parents reported effective communication through email advice, the communications officer, school diaries and the Student Academic Tracker. This helped them to follow their children's progress and support them at home. Around half of parents felt that they understood the school's performance in international assessments and most were aware of the school's own curricular requirements. They appreciated the social and environmental activities. Parents reported that community links were strong with weekend access to the school facilities, Arabic classes for parents and support from a wide range of local expertise. Some parents expressed concerns over heavy school bags, but almost all felt that their children were very happy, well cared for and safe in school. They also felt that the school listened to most of their suggestions. Teachers had almost entirely positive views. They were happy about students' behaviour and how it was managed. They believed their opinions were valued, including their views on curriculum modifications, and felt they were guided in providing for support for students with special educational needs. The views of students are not surveyed in schools where the oldest classes are Grade 4.

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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