

INSPECTION REPORT

JSS International School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT JSS International School

Location	Al Barsha
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jssisdubai.com
Telephone	04 325 6886
Address	Al Barsha South, Dubai
Principal	Gali Chalapathi Rao
Curriculum	ICSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-14 / Kindergarten to Grade 9
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,129
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	Monday 3rd October 2011 to Thursday 6th October 2011

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The context of the school

The JSS International School is a private school located in Al Barsha. The school opened in March 2009. It provides education for boys and girls from pre-primary to Grade 9, ages four to 14 years. At the time of the inspection there were 1,129 students on roll. The school followed an ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) curriculum.

There were 85 teachers and in the Kindergarten each teacher was supported by a teaching assistant. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. Students were grouped into 49 classes. Seventeen classes were in the Kindergarten stage and the rest from Grade 1 through to Grade 9. Almost all students were Indian nationals.

At the time of the inspection the Headteacher had been in post since the school's formation and the Principal had been in post for six months. There had been a significant increase in the school roll since the last inspection and a large number of teachers were recently appointed to the school.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The JSS International School provided an acceptable quality of education. The school had experienced a period of rapid growth in the last year and had almost doubled in size. The facilities were of very high quality but needed to be better utilised. Attainment and progress in Islamic Education, mathematics and English were good in certain phases. In Arabic, attainment and progress were unsatisfactory in the middle and senior parts of the school. The behavior of the children across the school was good and the quality of partnerships with parents was also good. In lessons, tasks were not always well suited to the differing needs of students. The progress made by students with special educational needs made in their normal lessons was unsatisfactory. Students' overall understanding of civic and Islamic issues, along with their economic and environmental understanding was good in all phases.

The school had not made sufficient progress in addressing certain recommendations from the previous inspection report. In particular, the senior leaders needed to ensure greater rigour in self-evaluation.

Key strengths

- Motivated students who were eager to learn and who were courteous and well-behaved;
- A varied enrichment programme for all students;
- The school's adoption of a healthy lifestyle programme including good quality physical education;
- The good communication with parents;
- The high quality buildings and range of facilities for learning.

Recommendations

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning to meet the needs of all students;
- Increase cross-curricular links and opportunities for working within the local and wider community;
- Include more members of the community on the governing board, ensure it meets regularly and has a positive effect upon the life of the school;
- Include students with special educational needs in regular classes and ensure that they make good progress;
- Include teachers in self-evaluation processes to achieve an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

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

	KG (Pre-Primary)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
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	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Attainment was acceptable overall with some good and unsatisfactory attainment in some subjects and age phases. In Islamic Education, students' attainment was good in the primary and middle phases. Students were able to recite verses from The Holy Qur'an correctly. Attainment was acceptable in science and students were able to explain seed germination and the classification of fruits although they lacked investigative and research skills. In English, attainment ranged from good to acceptable because in

some phases there were insufficient opportunities for students to extended pieces of creative writing. However, students demonstrated good speaking skills as demonstrated by their skills to give presentations to their peers about Emirati culture. Attainment in Arabic was unsatisfactory in the middle and secondary phases because comprehension skills had not been adequately developed and the majority of students were still at the copying stage in Grade 7. However, attainment in Arabic was acceptable in primary. Both attainment and progress in mathematics were good with students able to accurately complete complex calculations.

The progress of students was acceptable but ranged from unsatisfactory to good across different subjects. It was unsatisfactory in Arabic because some students struggled to recognise and recall the limited range of simple words and phrases they had been learning for a significant period of time. Consequently, only a few could effectively use key vocabulary. In English, students' progress was good and children had acquired skills to write grammatically correct sentences. Students with special educational needs made slow progress across all key subjects.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG (Pre-Primary)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good across the school. Relationships between students and teachers were positive and supportive. Student responsibility was encouraged and senior students took their civic duties seriously. Most students made healthy eating choices and displayed well-developed awareness of healthy life styles. Attendance and punctuality were good. Most students had good

knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Islam and almost all students in primary and secondary grades appreciated living in Dubai as a multi-cultural society. Their civic and economic awareness was enhanced through the student council and its shared decision-making processes. Students were involved with charity work and their recent visit to a local school had culminated in establishing a work experience program for senior students. Most students had awareness of Dubai's economic progress and its position in the world. Almost all students took good care of the school environment and were able to explain how they could contribute positively by saving water and recycling.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG (Pre-Primary)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching quality was acceptable, overall. In the middle school grades it was good but acceptable in all other phases. Most teachers knew their subjects well and understood the ways in which students learn. Lessons were typically well planned. Teaching strategies satisfactorily addressed the learning needs of most students. However, assignments were not always well differentiated to meet the needs of all students. Teachers employed resources beyond textbooks, including information and communications technology (ICT). Teachers guided students to engage in collaborative activities in most lessons. However, most collaborative activities were too short. Group work using worksheets was common but the assignments rarely led to higher level thinking skills. There was little development of enquiry skills. Teaching was generally stronger in the middle grades. A majority of middle school lessons were skillfully designed and effectively implemented. In these grades teachers' interactions with students ensured active participation to achieve relevant learning.

Learning was of acceptable quality, overall. It was good in the middle grades and acceptable in the rest of the school. Students had positive attitudes and could work without distraction. They could explain their learning to others clearly and they could collaborate in groups for portions of lessons. Students made

connections between new and previous learning. However, they did not relate learning enough to the real world. They used ICT in computer laboratories and for home assignments but rarely in classrooms.

The assessment of learning was of acceptable quality. The assessment practices consisted of lesson observations, work sheets, occasional quizzes and end-of-term examinations. Systems were in place to monitor and record the achievements of students over time and as a basis for providing interventions. However, strategies for reliably determining which individual students attained a lesson objective were insufficient. Additionally, the analysis of data was underdeveloped. Overall progress in topics was reported regularly to students. However, the school did not typically analyse examination results to determine which specific skills and concepts were being learned by groups of students. The resulting lack of awareness of students' strengths and weaknesses after examinations hindered the ability of teachers to plan future lessons to address the identified weaknesses of students.

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was of acceptable quality. It was broad and balanced and was reviewed annually. There were no significant gaps in the content of the curriculum. However, it offered limited choice to the senior groups of students in the science and commerce streams. Otherwise, it ensured that all students benefited from the provision of all subjects and included a variety of enrichment activities for students' personal development. The curriculum was planned appropriately to meet the needs of all students but its implementation had some weaknesses. In particular, opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking were few and inconsistent across the grades. Cross-curricular links and links with the wider community required further development.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were good. Students stated that they felt safe and staff members fully understood their duty of care to ensure that safety procedures were in place. Clear expectations and well established routines on the school buses ensured the safety of the students and duty staff. The site and buildings were clean, generally well maintained and access was available for any student with physical disabilities. Fire safety procedures were regularly practised and key information was well documented. Students' medical history files were kept securely, regularly updated by the doctor and nurse and used to ensure high quality care for each student in the school. The medical team had trained teachers in first aid. Healthy living was reflected in the curriculum and promoted at various stages throughout the school. Most teachers were fully aware of child protection arrangements and had received regular training.

The quality of support for students was good overall. Teachers knew most of their students well and, under the direction of school leaders, provided support for their social and emotional needs. These relationships under-pinned the ongoing management of behaviour and care and developed the confidence of students to ask for help, if needed. The school counsellor served as a liaison between students, staff and parents and supported transitions within the school. Identification of students with special educational needs was established but provision was not fully effective within all aspects of the work of the school. Provision for students in the withdrawal lessons did not build upon normal lessons to secure more rapid progress. The school monitored the attendance and punctuality of students and contacted parents when necessary.

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	Good

The quality of leadership of the school was acceptable. The Principal had introduced various policies and procedures and provided a direction for the school during its period of rapid growth. He was beginning to deal with the significant issues created by doubling the intake of teachers and students. Middle managers had some understanding of how to help the school to improve teaching and learning within their areas of responsibility. However, their skills and guidance required improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The school had undertaken a self-evaluation review. Although the process included discussion with middle managers, there was insufficient rigour in the use of evidence. This led some over-rating of aspects of the school's provision. There was a strategic plan and an improvement plan which stated the priorities for the coming years. The school had appropriate teacher appraisal systems. Limited progress had been made in addressing certain recommendations from the previous inspection report.

Parent and school partnerships were good. The school had initiated positive steps towards parental involvement which had strengthened students' learning and contributed to improving outcomes. Regular communication between the school and parents kept them informed and involved with the school. Reporting on students' progress in learning was disseminated by the school through electronic mail. Links with the wider community and other schools required further development.

Governance of the school was acceptable. At the time of the inspection the governing body had only met twice since the previous inspection, with a gap of eight months between meetings. It had recently added parents and a teacher to the board. The governors had an overview of the school and planned for its growth. There had been some consultation with the Parents' Advisory board.

The management of staffing and resources was good. The school was well resourced and most aspects of the school's daily routine were effective. All teachers were qualified to at least degree status. Overall, staff

deployment was efficient. The school had specialist teachers who performed specialised functions and had an induction programme for all staff. The premises were of high quality with well-designed facilities and areas of learning accessible to all. However, their potential was not fully exploited by the school.

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	303	37%
	Last year	367	72%
Teachers	39		44%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

A minority of parents responded to the survey, compared to a large majority last year. Most parents expressed satisfaction with the quality of education available at the school. Most believed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects, with the exception of Arabic. In Arabic as an additional language, a majority of parents thought progress was good, but a few parents believed it was not good. Parents held positive views about the school across a range of aspects, and believed that their children enjoyed lessons, were safe and cared for. A minority of teachers completed the survey. Their views about the school were positive and most teachers believed that inspection had led to improvements 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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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