

INSPECTION REPORT

The School of Research Science

Report published in April, 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The School of Research Science

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.srsdubai.ae
Telephone	04 601 1011
Address	P O Box 27463, Dubai
Principal	Ms Nan Billingham
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Foundation Stage 1-Year 13
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	2047
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	1309 (64%)
Date of the inspection	24th to 27th February 2014

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The context of the school

The School of Research Science is located in Al Qusais. At the time of the inspection, the student roll had increased by around 20 per cent compared to the previous year. The roll comprised 2047 boys and girls aged from three to 18 years. Most students were of Emirati or other Arab nationality. Around half of all students were in the primary phase.

The school followed a curriculum which was based on the National Curriculum for England for most subjects, and the Ministry of Education guidance for others. Students took GCSE and IGCSE examinations in secondary school at the end of Year 11. They took GCE A/S level examinations at the end of Year 12 and GCE A levels at the end of Year 13.

Including the senior leadership team, there were 167 teachers, all appropriately qualified. Approximately 44 per cent of teachers had worked in the school for one year or less. The majority of teachers were trained in the UK or Ireland. Teachers were supported by 61 support staff.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- The quality of teaching, attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language throughout the school;
- Assessment and its use by teachers to report frequently to parents on progress and attainment;
- The rich curriculum;
- Provision for students with special educational needs, especially the flexibility of support and the team teaching;
- The involvement of governors in assuring the quality of the school's development.

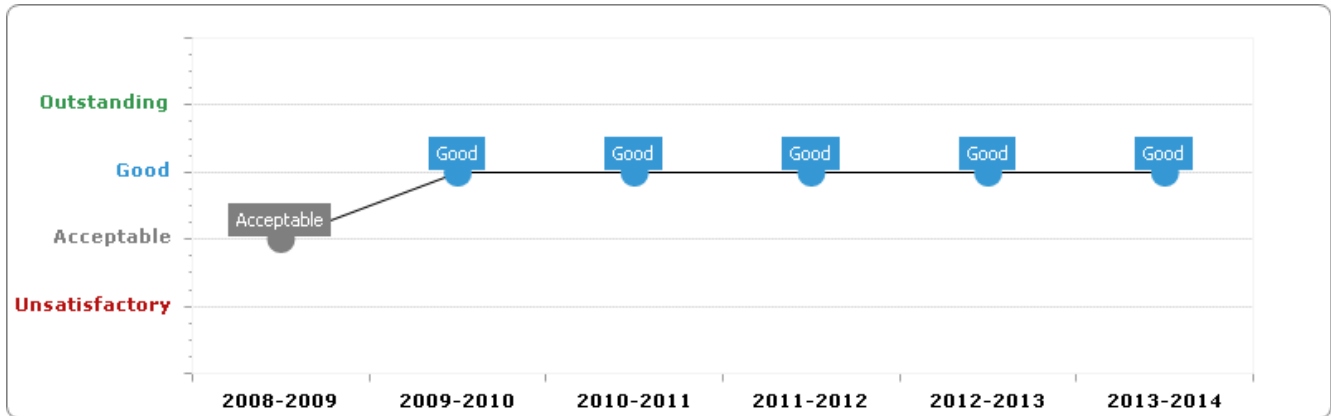
Recommendations

- Improve the behaviour and attitude of a small number of students especially in Secondary.
- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching across the school by ensuring that all lessons have a suitable variety of tasks, activities and resources, and that teaching meets the needs of all students.
- Improve punctuality to school and lessons within the school day.

Progress since the last inspection

- There had been improvements in students' progress and attainment, especially in Arabic as an additional language and English but some judgements for progress and attainment had fallen, especially in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching had improved in the post-16 phase to outstanding, but it was less effective in the other phases compared to the previous year.
- Senior managers and staff members had broadened self-evaluation by involving more staff in evaluating their areas of work and planning for improvement.
- Students were now taking more initiatives and reflecting more on their own learning. The recently appointed senior prefects were having a positive influence on the school.

Trend of overall performance



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science				
Attainment	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Quality of students' learning skills	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Acceptable	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Outstanding
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Students' attainment was outstanding in Islamic Education. Most students had a deep understanding of Islamic concepts and morals as well as various Fiqh laws. In Arabic as a first language, attainment was outstanding in the primary and post-16 phases, and good in secondary. Most primary students were able to explain their ideas in discussion and were aware that language could be used persuasively. Students' oral and written skills were well developed. In Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment was outstanding. Students had very good vocabulary which they used to express their ideas and opinions clearly in speaking and in writing. In English, attainment was acceptable in the Foundation Stage and good across all other phases. Most students were able to identify key ideas when summarising text. Girls in particular had the ability to analyse texts critically. Attainment in mathematics was acceptable in Foundation Stage and good in the other phases. In the post-16 phase, students had good algebraic manipulation skills. In science, attainment was outstanding in the secondary and post-16 phases, and good in the other phases. Children in the Foundation Stage were beginning to explore their own world through practical activities. In the primary phase, these skills were developed further. In biology, chemistry and physics, secondary and post-16 students had a very good understanding of scientific concepts.

In Islamic Education, students' progress was good in the primary and outstanding in the other phases. Students in the primary phase had progressed well with Qur'anic recitation skills. In the secondary and post-16 phases, students continued to develop confidence in extending their understanding and application of Islamic concepts. In Arabic as a first language, primary students' language skills had developed very well. Their progress was outstanding; the progress of other students was good. In Arabic as an additional language, students' progress was outstanding. They had made very good progress in the four language skills and this enabled them to communicate very effectively. In English, progress was outstanding across all phases. Most students joined the school with little or no English and they quickly developed a good range of language skills. In mathematics, progress was good in the Foundation Stage and the primary phase, and outstanding in the secondary and post-16 phases. Students made a good start in developing their number skills in Foundation Stage and they progressed well through the school. Challenging lessons in all phases supported the development of outstanding scientific skills across the school.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning was good in the Foundation Stage and outstanding in all other phases. Most student enjoyed learning, participated actively in lessons and took a pride in their work. In the Foundation Stage, most children were engaged readily in tasks and activities. For example, a group of younger children

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persevered with a challenging word-search activity. However, not all children could sustain good concentration. In all phases students were developing skills as independent learners and took some responsibility for their own learning. Students shared their ideas and used these to support progress in their learning. Most students collaborated effectively to share their knowledge and understanding, often through lively debate, and further develop their reasoning skills. Students were able to use real-life contexts to connect learning, for example between Islamic Education and science, and reinforce their understanding.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development was outstanding across most of the school. Most students had responsible attitudes and behaviour, and had developed strong and respectful relationships with staff. However, a small number of lower secondary students demonstrated poor behaviour in lessons and disrespect for staff. Overall, students were very clear in their understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and enjoyed full school support in this area. Attendance was good but there was a tendency for students to arrive late for lessons during the day.

Students' understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness were outstanding across the school. Students demonstrated a very good understanding of Islam and could make links between the UAE, Dubai and the Islamic culture. Students talked well about how Dubai had changed over time and they had a very good understanding of the cultural heritage of the UAE. They could describe their own cultures and traditions, and provide appropriate details and examples. Students also showed great respect for visitors and appreciated the multi-cultural society of Dubai.

Students' community and environmental responsibility was good in the Foundation Stage and outstanding in other phases. Many students were community-minded. A strong work ethic was evident. The school had provided students with responsibility and a voice through a variety of approaches. The recently appointed senior prefects were beginning to have a positive influence on the school. Students had initiated, established and continued to be involved in a variety of environmental projects and activities inside and outside the school.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage, primary and secondary phases, and outstanding in post-16. Almost all teachers had good subject knowledge and were able to use it well to explain new concepts. In

the Foundation Stage, teachers understood how children learn and planned interesting activities for them. Throughout the school, teachers planned lessons carefully, set clear learning objectives and shared these well with students. They used resources well in lessons to enliven learning and capture the interest of students. Teachers had a clear understanding of students' abilities but they did not always use this information well to plan tasks to challenge all groups of students sufficiently. Teachers often made post-16 lessons stimulating and exciting, thus motivating students to work hard. Some good and outstanding teaching was evident in other areas of the curriculum, including art, computer science, design and technology, humanities and physical education.

Assessment was outstanding across the school. Teachers assessed the progress that students made carefully at regular intervals. They used this information very well to provide all students with aspirational targets that helped them to accelerate their progress and to report to parents. Teachers encouraged students to reflect on their learning and what they needed to learn next. For those students who fell behind in their learning, teachers provided flexible, well-targeted additional support to accelerate their progress to match that of their peers. Teachers used a wide range of assessment methods effectively. In lessons, they assessed students' knowledge and depth of understanding of their learning through class discussions and by asking probing questions. Students were frequently asked to assess the quality of lessons and their views were respected by teachers.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum quality was outstanding in all phases. The programmes followed the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, the English National curriculum and the Ministry of Education curriculum for Arabic and Islamic studies. Teachers adapted programmes to reflect the school's aims and values. The Foundation Stage curriculum included imaginatively planned topics which helped children to connect their learning very well. Teachers emphasised communication skills, personal development and activity-based learning. Managers and teachers reviewed the curriculum regularly and this resulted in innovation and further refinement in the curriculum in primary, secondary and post-16 phases. The curriculum provided many opportunities for teachers to develop higher order thinking skills. The strong collaboration between primary and secondary teachers ensured excellent continuity in students' learning. Staff enriched the curriculum through an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities which made a significant contribution to students' academic and personal achievement. There were very high levels of student participation in these activities. The 'Learning Without Boundaries' programme provided students with excellent opportunities to develop a broad range of skills.

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The curriculum design was good. It was thoughtfully planned to provide stimulating and appropriately challenging experiences for all groups of students. Personalised learning in small groups was a strong feature of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Teachers adjusted programmes very effectively to ensure that students with special educational needs made outstanding progress. The innovative curriculum, with its emphasis on learning skills and wide range of enrichment activities, provided very good opportunities for students of all abilities to excel. In secondary and post-16 phases, the school organised work experience and careers education that prepared students very well for progression to university, although there were not enough vocational programmes.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The arrangements for ensuring students' health, safety and security were outstanding. The premises were well maintained and record keeping was meticulous. Staff members had received training in child protection arrangements and were made aware of students' medical needs. All medicines were stored safely and administered by the school doctor and medical staff. Medical facilities were well organised and accessible to all students. Detailed records of fire drills and records of any incidents were retained. The cafeteria provided good healthy food choices and healthy living was promoted within the curriculum. Bus safety arrangements were implemented very effectively; there was a high level of adult supervision during bus arrival and departure times.

The quality of support was outstanding in all phases. Staff-student relationships were positive. The school's behaviour policy provided clear guidelines for teachers to follow in cases where they might be concerned about a student's behaviour. Staff recorded attendance and punctuality rigorously and early contact was made with parents if a student was absent without explanation. The school had an open admissions policy and procedures for the early identification of students with special educational needs were very effective. Specialist staff provided excellent support that contributed to students' outstanding progress. There were effective systems for monitoring students' personal development. Students were able to seek advice and support on academic or personal issues and were confident that their concerns would be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was outstanding. The principal and other senior managers were ambitious for the school and were dedicated to achieving high standards and raising attainment. They were relentless in their pursuit of

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these high standards. The recently introduction of coaching and 'learning hubs' to improve the skills of good teachers further was a positive initiative, which was helping to enhance relationships and provide a more collegiate approach to staff development. Leadership was distributed well throughout the school. Subject co-ordinators, year heads and other middle leaders made a significant contribution to the leadership and management of departments and stages. Managers had deployed staff innovatively. The governors and senior leaders displayed a good capacity to plan for and further the school's development.

The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning was outstanding. The school had a comprehensive range of self-evaluation procedures which were applied systematically across the school. Although some of their evaluations were too positive, senior managers had an accurate picture of where the school was strong and where further development was needed. They were addressing the targeted areas with very effective improvement plans and these had resulted in improvements in a number of areas. Senior managers regularly reviewed the performance of teachers and provided them with appropriate targets for further development.

The partnership with parents and the community was outstanding. The school communicated very well with parents by using a wide range of media. Parents had good access to staff. Staff organised very helpful workshops for parents to explain how they can help their children to learn. The school provided frequent helpful reports to parents on the progress and attainment of their children. The school had productive links with a number of schools and organisations in Dubai and further afield.

Governance was outstanding. Governors provided a strong lead for the school. They provided the distinctive strategic vision for the school which emphasised the development of Islamic values alongside a UK curriculum. Governors had an intimate knowledge of the school. They carried out rigorous reviews of the school. They received detailed reports from the principal on the school's performance and held her to account through their regular board meetings.

Management was outstanding. The school ran smoothly and there were very good procedures and policies. The school was staffed with sufficient well-qualified teachers. The turnover of teachers was relatively high and this made it difficult to have a consistent and coherent approach to learning and teaching. Very good training was provided for teachers and other staff. The buildings were safe, secure and clean with appropriate specialist facilities. Each area of the school had suitable resources.

[View judgements](#)

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

In this inclusive school, most students with special educational needs made outstanding progress because of the early and accurate identification of their individual needs. Specialists constructed individual education plans which provided teachers with clear guidance on the provision that should be made to meet students' particular needs. Most teachers took account of the content of students' individual education plans when planning learning tasks. This procedure was well developed in the primary phase but not yet fully embedded in the secondary phase. The targets set for students were appropriately challenging. Underpinning students' excellent progress was the systematic checking of their progress towards their learning targets. Specialist staff organised regular reviews of the effectiveness of the provision and they adjusted support as necessary. This helped to ensure that students' targets were appropriate and that they were being met. Gifted and talented students made good progress because they were provided with a good range of stimulating additional activities. The leadership and management of special needs provision was very effective. Specialist staff provided a high level of expertise. They fully understood the range and complexity of students' needs. Special needs staff had improved the links with parents. They encouraged parents to alert the school of any concerns they had about their children. In addition, they fully consulted parents in the writing of their children's individual education plans and in the additional support provided.

How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

The quality of Arabic teaching as a first language was generally high, but it was not consistent across all classes. Teaching in primary classes was relatively strong compared to the quality of teaching in secondary and post-16 phases, where it was less consistent. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and had good experience in teaching Arabic as a first language. However, a few teachers were not always effective in classroom management or ensuring all students were progressing and achieving highly. Teachers' interactions and instructions had a positive impact on students' language skills. Students were frequently encouraged to apply correct pronunciation and use of standard Arabic. Overall, teachers planned lessons well. However, in a few lessons, teachers' expectations were not high enough. The curriculum was compliant with the Ministry of Education requirements. It had a clear rationale and its delivery was well planned. The curriculum was reviewed on an annual basis. The Arabic curriculum was based on the Ministry of Education text book with enriching resources and activities which made it more interesting for the majority of students in all stages. Effective adjustments were made to tasks and activities to address the needs of many students with special education needs.

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	585	61%
	Last year	184	22%
Teachers	86		78%
Students	140		88%

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

Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that their children enjoyed school. Almost all students and most parents felt that the school was safe and that students were well looked after. Most parents and teachers and a majority of students were satisfied with the quality of education and teaching provided by the school. Most parents thought that good progress was made in Islamic Education, Arabic as a first language and English. In Arabic as a second language, a majority of parents and a minority of students thought that good progress was made in that subject. The majority of parents considered that their children made good progress in science and mathematics. Most parents and a minority of students reported that school work was interesting and challenging. Almost all parents thought that reports on their children and meetings with teachers were helpful. Majorities of parents and teachers felt that the school was well led and that leaders listened to their views.

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.

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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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