

INSPECTION REPORT

Emirates International School - Meadows

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Emirates International School - Meadows

Location	Meadows
Type of school	Private
Website	www.eischools.ae
Telephone	04-3629009
Address	PO Box 120118, Meadows 4, Dubai, UAE
Principal	David Robert Charles Hicks, Carmel Platt
Curriculum	IB/UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-19 / Kindergarten to Post 16
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1506
Number of Emirati students	29 (2%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 27th February to Thursday 1st March 2012

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The context of the school

The Emirates International School - Meadows is located in the Meadows area, Emirates Hills. It is a private school offering education to boys and girls aged three to 19 years, from Kindergarten to post-16. At the time of the inspection there were 1,506 students on roll and over 80 nationalities were represented.

The school followed a UK and International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. The school had candidate status for the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), for students aged three to 12 and the Middle Years Programme (MYP) for students aged 11 to 16 years. The school was authorised to teach the post-16 IB Diploma programme. At the time of the inspection, students took IGCSE courses (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) in the final two years of the secondary section followed by IBDP courses (International Baccalaureate Diploma) in the post-16 phase.

There were 77 members of teaching staff in the Kindergarten and primary school, and 75 in the secondary school. All held qualifications matching their roles in school.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The school overall performance was good and the school had improved since its last inspection. There was a positive working ethos. Attainment and progress in most subjects in the primary phase were good. Most students displayed positive attitudes to learning and became increasingly independent as they moved through the school. They had a good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and its relevance to the school environment. The teaching and learning approach in school was more cohesive and it was reinforced by a stronger self-evaluation in secondary in most subjects. These improvements were a direct result of the positive impact of senior leadership team on most aspects of the school's work.

A few areas of the school were still underdeveloped. The attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic were acceptable. The curriculum was evolving but the school did not communicate curriculum information clearly to the school community. The quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment in Kindergarten remained acceptable and in need of further improvement. The school did not systematically use assessment information to ensure learning tasks were planned to meet students'

needs. Finally, the skills of the middle management team needed to be reinforced to help them fulfill their roles more effectively.

Key strengths

- The good attainment and progress in most subjects in the primary phase;
- The positive attitudes to learning displayed by most students as they become increasingly independent moving through the school;
- The good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and its relevance to the school environment;
- The more consistent approach to teaching and learning enhanced by the stronger self-evaluation in secondary in most subjects;
- The positive impact of the senior leadership team on most aspects of the school's work.

Recommendations

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Define and communicate the curriculum more clearly to parents and all teachers;
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment in Kindergarten;
- Improve the use of assessment information to ensure learning tasks meet students' needs;
- Provide training opportunities to further develop the skills of the middle management team.

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

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

Attainment was good in the majority of subjects across most phases. Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable. Most of students at lower grades had an adequate knowledge and understanding of the life of the Prophet (PBUH), Islamic etiquettes and values. In the higher grades, students could recite a range of verses from The Holy Qur'an but were less confident in pinpointing the sources of the Sunna. In Arabic as a first language, by the end of the primary and secondary stages, most students' skills were in line with

curriculum expectations. In post-16, the majority of students' attainment was good and above curriculum expectations. Across all stages students' grammatical skills were underdeveloped. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment in primary and secondary was acceptable. Most of students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills were in line with curriculum expectations and students in secondary stage relied on English to understand teachers' instructions and to communicate with their peers. In English, attainment was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the other phases. Most students achieved results at IGCSE and IB diploma in line with international standards. In mathematics, in the Kindergarten, most children developed a good grasp of number and were able to add different numbers to make up 10. A few were able to subtract single digits from any number up to 20. In the primary phase most students understood that a fraction represented a ratio and were able to convert fractions to percentages or decimals. By the end of Grade 11, most students understood Pythagoras' Theorem and could calculate the length of an unknown side using the Sine Rule. The Diploma students' attainment was only acceptable as boys did not reach their full potential. In science, Kindergarten children showed acceptable attainment in understanding the uses of water. Investigative skills were less well developed. By the end of Year 6, most students could understand forms, storage and transformation of energy. By the end of the secondary school, most students could test and tabulate V-1 characteristics of bulbs and diodes. At post-16, the majority of students could explain abiotic factors that affect the rate of transpiration in terrestrial plants.

In Islamic Education, in the primary grades, students made good progress in relation to their lesson objectives. Most students in higher grades made slower progress because they lacked opportunities for analytical thinking and reflection. In Arabic as a first language, most students in primary and post-16 made good progress against their lesson objectives. Most students were gaining good language and skills. However, they lacked opportunities to develop their free reading and writing skills. In Arabic as a second language, most students made good progress in primary against their learning objectives. Reading and speaking skills were the least developed skills. In English, progress was acceptable in Kindergarten and good in the other phases. Less active learning methodology limited Kindergarten children's progress. Elsewhere, whilst the majority of students were not native English speakers, they still made good progress in all four skills. In mathematics, progress was stable from Kindergarten to secondary but boys' attainment and progress was hindered at post-16 due to a lack of independent learning skills. In science, most primary, secondary and post-16 students made good progress as measured against learning objectives.

At the time of the inspection, there were 29 Emirati students in school. In all the key subjects, their attainment was in line with their peers and they achieved well in their examinations against their expected grades in most subjects.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

Across the school most students were respectful to each other and to their teachers. They demonstrated appropriate attitudes, self-discipline, and independence, particularly in secondary. This was in line with the post-16 vision in the school of encouraging greater student autonomy. Most students also demonstrated good attitudes towards healthy living. They made wise choices when eating and understood the importance of taking exercise inside and outside the school. Most students had good attendance and punctuality. They had a good understanding of Islam due to the enhancement of the Islamic values in the students' lives. Most students were positive about the local culture, traditions and the importance of keeping their local identity. The multi-cultural nature of Dubai society provided students with opportunities to learn about other cultures. Most students understood their responsibilities as members of a school community and took on key roles. The students' voice was indeed influential in the school decisions. Most students knew how Dubai had developed and could give some reasons for the changes in Dubai and the other Emirates. They cared for their school and local environment. This was demonstrated in the way they kept the school clean and tidy. Older students understood the need to protect local, national and world resources but all did not benefit from a wide programme to actively support schemes promoting sustainability and conservation.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in other phases. While there were a few examples of good teaching in the Kindergarten, in most lessons there was too much whole class teaching with children spending too much time listening to lengthy introductions and explanations. In the other phases, teachers' subject knowledge was good, ensuring that lessons were well planned and suitably resourced to support and enhance learning. Relationships were strong and high expectations underpinned effective class management. In a minority of lessons, the level of challenge was not high enough, particularly for those students who were capable of attaining higher levels, because learning tasks were not always well matched to students' ability levels. Teaching in non-key subjects was good. In these lessons, teachers promoted interactive and engaging learning. For example, in a modern language and business lesson, the use of new technologies and collaborative learning led to high levels of engagement.

Learning was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the rest of the school. Most children in the Kindergarten had positive attitudes to learning and were eager to take part. However, in a minority of lessons, children were only passively engaged because the learning activities were not stimulating enough. In most lessons in the rest of the school, students were keen and willing learners. Almost all applied themselves well and persevered to complete challenging learning tasks. Most students developed increasingly mature collaborative skills when working with their peers. In the majority of lessons, students were provided with opportunities to develop enquiry, research and critical thinking skills, but this was not consistent across all subjects and all phases.

Assessment was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the rest of the school. In the Kindergarten, there was inconsistency in the assessment, tracking and recording of children's progress. As a result, most teachers did not have a clear understanding of the progress children were making. In the rest of the

school, new assessment procedures have been introduced which enabled teachers to set students targets and monitor their progress. These are particularly beneficial in the upper secondary and post-16 phases. Most teachers had a good understanding of their students' strengths and weaknesses, and in the majority of lessons, self and peer-assessment were regular features of the learning process. However, there was inconsistency in teachers' use of assessment information to ensure learning tasks were appropriately challenging for all groups of students. While there were examples of very effective marking, which provided students with clear information on the standard of their work and how they might improve, such practice was inconsistent across subjects and phases.

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

	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

The curriculum in the Kindergarten was acceptable and good in the other phases. The introduction of the International Baccalaureate combined personal development with academic learning throughout the school. Curriculum review had resulted in an improved progression of skill development. There were increased opportunities to learn collaboratively through investigation and problem-solving and good cross-curricular links, particularly in the upper primary and secondary grades. Local culture courses in secondary and the inclusion of Arabic in the Kindergarten curriculum connected students to the local context. Students were offered a wide choice of examination courses at IGCSE and IB diploma level. There was limited awareness in the early years of how best to use the curriculum to meet the needs of young children and this resulted in too much teacher-led activity and too little independent learning. Extra-curricular activities were wide-ranging; they included sports, artistic activities and academic support as well as service-learning and challenging options such a Duke of Edinburgh award and Model United Nations.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

The quality of arrangements for the protection and support of students was good. The school had effective policies and procedures which were known to almost all stakeholders. Bus transport arrangements were very good and ensured the safe arrival and departure of students. New initiatives to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists in the front car park had brought limited improvement. The confined space raised safety concerns which the school continued to resolve with the relevant authorities. The school premises were well maintained, and buildings and equipment used by all groups of students were appropriate and fit for purpose. Medical staff co-ordinated routine medical checks and ensured that all requirements were met to ensure the proper care of students. The school had education programmes in place to inform students about healthy living. After recent initiatives, canteen provision reflected the views of students, parents and the school regarding healthy eating. Students' questionnaires indicated that almost all students felt safe at the school. A good child protection policy had been developed through consultations and almost all students, staff and parents were aware of the policy and knew who to contact should concerns arise.

All those who formed part of the school community had a care and concern for others. Staff handling of behaviour issues was good throughout the school and a particular strength in secondary and post-16. Good procedures were in place to provide students with help and guidance on the next stages of their careers. Students' academic performance was closely monitored to ensure that their potential was realised. There were good arrangements for identifying students with special educational needs. The Learning Support and English as an additional language teams were effective and specialist support for students was good. There were accurate records of attendance and punctuality, and recent initiatives such as 'Hot Spot Days' had seen a good improvement in attendance and punctuality in the secondary and post-16 phases.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

The leadership of the school was good. The new leadership team was now well established and well supported by the middle leadership team. They had high standards and created a positive working ethos where all staff worked harmoniously. This was less the case in the Kindergarten where some key staff struggled to fully embrace the whole school vision for improvement by the primary school Principal. Systems to raise standards were fully in place, particularly from the primary phase to post-16. As a result, some of the students' outcomes had improved since the last inspection. This was less apparent in the Kindergarten where improvement was slower and more sporadic. Co-ordinators had made an effective start sharing best practice and whilst this practice was in the early stages of development in the Kindergarten, it had nevertheless had a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Self-evaluation was good and leaders had an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas of development. The two Principals were proactive in implementing strategies linked to the recommendations from the previous report, resulting in improvement in attitudes and behaviour, as well as teaching and learning and assessment, in secondary and post-16. However, the impact of the strategies implemented in the Kindergarten was still low.

The partnership and communication with parents were good. Parents were well informed about both academic and personal development of their children but they felt the school was not always very clear about the nature of their evolving curriculum. For example, they struggled to relate the UK assessment procedures used in school with the philosophy of the International Baccalaureate curriculum. Parents participated in various committees which directly influenced the life and work of the school including, for example, a parent representative was in charge of each grade in school and liaised with the rest of the parents' community about non-academic concerns. Other parents also played a crucial part in raising the profile of the school in the community through fairs and careers events.

Governance was good. The board of governors and its director supported the leadership team well and shared the vision of improvement by being actively involved in evaluating all aspects of school life. The board responded well to issues and were proactive about leading the improvement of the school.

The school had a good complement of well-qualified teachers and up-to-date resources. The number of teachers was proportionate to the number of students and staff all held qualifications appropriate to the age ranges they taught. However, the experience of middle managers varied and training opportunities to enable them to improve were insufficient. Pockets of best practice had been identified in school but again, the time allocation to share good practice was limited. Resources for learning such as information technology were available in school but needed to be further developed. Facilities in school were good overall but there was limited use of the libraries as a tool for independent learning through the use of multimedia and new technologies.

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	165	14%
	Last year	229	14%
Teachers	60		42%
Students	39		16%

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

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents, teachers and students. A small minority of parents and students responded to the survey. A significant minority of the teachers completed the survey too. Parents felt that the leadership of the school had already had a great impact on some of the students' academic and personal outcome since the last inspection. This was echoed by the students and their teachers. The majority of students recognized that Islamic Education and Arabic were their weaker subjects. All stakeholders agreed that behaviour was very good in the school. The majority of parents, teachers and

students were pleased with the school, its ethos and care for the students. Most parents recognised that the school had implemented strategies for ensuring children safety on the car park but admitted that the problem was not totally solved. Some parents felt that the needs of their children were not always met in lessons. Home-school links and communication were judged to be good overall but parents felt that the school needed to communicate the nature of their changing curriculum more clearly.

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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