

INSPECTION REPORT

Our Own English High School - Dubai

Report published in February 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Our Own English High School - Dubai

Location	Al Warqa'a
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemsoo-dubai.com
Telephone	04-236-1335
Address	PO Box 3004, Al Warqa'a 3, Dubai
Principal	Mr. Aziz Akhtar
Curriculum	Indian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	7,970
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	Sunday 9th to Thursday 13th October 2011

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2011-2012	3
How has the school progressed since the last inspection?.....	3
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	5
How good is the students' personal and social development?	6
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	8
How well does the school protect and support students?	9
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	10
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	12
What happens next?.....	13
How to contact us	13
Our work with schools	14

The context of the school

Our Own English High School is situated in Al Warqa'a. It opened in 1968 and moved to its present site in September 2011. The total enrolment of the school was 7,970 students, aged three to 17 years. Classes are mixed through to Grade 4 and then girls only from Grades 5 to 12. The school had been in its present campus for only 20 days at the time of the inspection.

The school followed the Indian CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) curriculum but offered the CBSE-International curriculum in Grades 1, 6 and 9. Students could sit for the CBSE-International examination after Grade 10 and all students sat the examination at the end of Grade 12.

There were 356 teachers on staff, including the Principal and senior leadership team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. However, only about onehalf of the Kindergarten staff had early childhood training. There were no Emirati students in the school. There were three nationalities comprising the student body, with 99 percent of the students being of Indian heritage. Very few students had been identified as having some form of special education need. The identified students received support in a one-to-one setting in addition to curriculum modification and accommodations within their classrooms. However, the modifications and accommodations were not consistently provided across all classes.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Our Own English High School provided a good quality of education. It had some outstanding features, which included attainment and progress in English and science at the secondary level. Additionally, middle and secondary students' attitudes and behaviour, and middle level students' civic and Islamic understanding were outstanding. The quality of health and safety provision was outstanding at all levels of the school. Following the previous inspection, the school had moved into a new facility. Resources to support instruction were appropriate, but small classroom sizes and large class enrolments limited their effectiveness.

Since the last inspection, the school had made progress in addressing the recommendations of inspectors. An appropriate action plan had been developed which addressed each recommendation, but progress was inconsistent, particularly in improving Arabic instruction and assessment. Significant progress had been made addressing the needs of students with special educational needs. However, the school had not accurately identified nor fully met the specific learning needs of all the children with special educational needs. The school leaders demonstrated a good capacity to improve.

Key strengths

- Attainment and progress were outstanding in secondary English and science;
- Students' attitudes toward learning and behaviour were mostly good and outstanding in the middle and secondary grades;
- The health, welfare and safety of students were rigorously promoted by all;
- Excellent arrangements for students' arrival and departure were in place;
- Positive community values formed a central part in the life of the school.

Recommendations

- Raise attainment and improve students' progress in Arabic;
- Strengthen teaching to focus on the needs of individual learners more effectively;
- Develop assessment systems to help identify gaps in students' learning and inform teachers' planning;
- Ensure that the time allocated to Islamic Education and Arabic lessons is compliant with Ministry of Education regulations;
- Improve the school's systems for the identification of students with special educational needs and ensure that teachers plan appropriate tasks for such students to meet their specific learning needs.

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

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

Students' attainment was good across most subjects. In Arabic as an additional language, student achieved age-appropriate standards. In English and science at the secondary stage, attainment was outstanding and this was verified by the students' success in external examinations.

In Islamic Education, progress was good across all phases. Most students understood basic Islamic concepts, Islamic duties and their responsibilities. Progress in Arabic for second language learners was acceptable across all stages. Students could read from their books fluently but some of them did not have the ability to pronounce the sounds correctly. Progress in English was good in the Kindergarten, primary and middle phases and outstanding in the secondary phase. In mathematics, progress was good across all phases. A majority of students made better than expected progress across the school. Progress in sciences was good in the Kindergarten, primary and middle phases and outstanding in the secondary phase. Science students could set up experiments and equipment safely, use the equipment and chemicals appropriately and record their work to a high standard.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

Attitudes and behaviour were good in the early and primary years, and outstanding in the middle and secondary phases. Almost all older students responded positively to teachers' instructions, displaying high levels of individual responsibility. Relating effectively with their peers, they enthusiastically supported and challenged each other. A minority of younger students lacked self-discipline when not supervised, running about corridors, ignoring litter protocols and taking little responsibility for their well-being. Attendance throughout the school was good. Most students had good awareness of local cultures, traditions and Islam. Most middle school students recognised and appreciated the relevance and value of these to a high level.

Similarly, while most students had thorough understanding of how their environmental learning played a part in their daily lives, the middle school students demonstrated a keen sense of how economic issues affected their environmental behaviour. They led a variety of initiatives to improve their new school campus.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

The quality of teaching was good in all of the grades. Most teachers had secure subject knowledge and made good links to previous learning and life in Dubai. Almost all teachers shared the learning objectives of their lessons with students and gave clear explanations. Most lessons were well planned and time management was usually effective. Almost all teachers made use of the available resources as space permitted. Occasionally, open questioning was used to introduce topics, leading to good class discussions, mainly in the secondary grades. Teachers had good relationships with students and offered appropriate praise and encouragement. A few teachers encouraged higher order thinking and asked students to apply their learning to different situations. While teachers identified the needs of individual learners and planned lessons to cater to all groups, there was little evidence of differentiation beyond some targeted questioning. In most lessons, the lower attaining students, though identified, were not supported well. More able students were often not challenged adequately. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) and other resources was limited.

Students' learning in all grades was good. Most students had positive attitudes to learning, were well prepared for lessons, engaged and motivated throughout their classes. Students were able to make connections between previous and new learning, and made links to real-life situations. Opportunities for a majority of students to participate and actively engage in the learning process were provided. Individual and group work was evident in most lessons. A majority of the students were aware of their learning

targets and made significant progress towards achieving them. Almost all students developed good listening, speaking, reading, writing, calculating, interpreting and determining skills. Application of critical thinking and proficiency in research was less evident in lessons. The use of ICT by students to support learning was limited to the secondary school. The support extended for students with special educational needs was inconsistent.

Assessment was good across all levels. However, leaders and teachers were not clear in their understanding of on-going assessment. Exercise books were marked regularly and testing was well established. Teachers knew their students' strengths and weaknesses but did not use that knowledge to tailor their teaching to meet the different needs of individual students. In particular, teachers did not adjust their questioning to ensure that all students developed secure knowledge and skills, whilst challenging the most able. Students' involvement in assessing their own learning was inconsistent and they received mixed, inconsistent guidance on how they could improve.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Good

The curriculum at all four phases was good and ensured that students built systematically on what they knew and could do. The curriculum for the Kindergarten and the primary classes stressed the importance of practical activities and learning through first-hand experiences. These objectives were not consistently put into practice in lessons. There were clear strategies for implementation which included relating lessons to real-life experiences and ensuring that students were prepared for the next stage of their education. The curriculum was reviewed every year and included provision for all subjects plus enrichment activities for students' personal development. The provision of Islamic Education lessons in Grades 11 and 12 and Arabic in Grade 9 did not meet the time requirements of the Ministry of Education. The template for lesson planning did not prompt teachers to provide for students with special educational needs, including the more able and talented students. In the Kindergarten there were limited opportunities for children to listen to, enjoy and begin to read short stories.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

Arrangements for ensuring all students' health and safety were outstanding. All staff members and particularly the medical staff effectively carried out their responsibilities. Routine medical checks were carried out prior to entry and detailed records were kept secure. Medication was kept appropriately. Travel arrangements were well organised and monitored, and high levels of security ensured students' safety. The new school facility was clean throughout and well maintained. The building was equipped to be entirely inclusive and had lifts, ramps and toilets for disabled students. Fire drills had already been carried out for each floor and arrangements were in place to complete a full evacuation. Healthy living was promoted within the curriculum and older students took responsibility for creating displays and information. Canteens offered healthy quality food choices. Excellent systems and policies were in place to ensure child protection arrangements were understood by all.

The quality of support provided by the school was good overall. Most teachers were aware of their students' social, physical and intellectual needs. They offered valuable advice and guidance on improving their performance in key subjects and future career pathways. The school was active in providing students with knowledge of possible career choices and actively supported students who had not made the expected progress. However, guidance on steps students should take to improve performance was inconsistent throughout the school. The school's strong personal care and support made a significant contribution to the positive relationships between students and with adults. The support for students with special education needs was inconsistent across the school. Whilst students were supported well outside the classroom individually, this was less effective in whole-class settings. There were accurate records of attendance and punctuality which were well managed. Classrooms were small and limited opportunities for active learning activities.

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 Principal was new to the school but almost all of the senior leadership team had prior experience in the school. The leadership team, working within a collaborative model, had thorough knowledge of all aspects of the school and its supporting operations. The leadership team had the capacity for managing further improvement. A few of the senior leaders had classroom responsibilities that limited their ability to effectively supervise and address teaching and learning in their subject areas.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Systematic improvement planning had involved all of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Strategies had been devised and shared with all staff in curriculum meetings. However, not all actions had been wholly successful. The school had yet to ensure that on-going assessments were suitably influencing students' next steps in learning.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction and support for the school both during interviews and in the survey. Parents believed that the English, science and mathematics programmes were strong, while expressing concern regarding the teaching of Arabic as an additional language. Productive links existed between the school, parents and the larger school community. The parents cited the positive school and home communication as one strength of the school.

Governance of the school was good. The Board of Governors was keenly aware of the needs of the school and open to suggestions for improvement. The positive influence of the Board of Governors was reflected in the new facility and governors met frequently with school leaders to discuss areas of concern and progress. The Board had direct lines of communications with parents and other stakeholders.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was good. The new school was functioning smoothly in the short time since it opened. It had excellent resources, two libraries, six science laboratories and

specialist rooms for a range of curricular opportunities. Large class sizes and the small classroom spaces restricted opportunities for learning through practical activities. Teachers were well deployed and mostly well qualified. They were supported well by committed supervisors and had opportunities to plan together weekly. They had benefitted from recent professional development.

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	2558	37%
	Last year	4569	69%
Teachers	85		25%
Students	303		38%

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

A significant minority of parents responded to the survey, far fewer than last year's majority. Almost all were satisfied with the overall quality of education available at the school. Most parents believed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects, with the exception of Arabic as an additional language. Only a majority of parents believed that progress was good and a few believed it was not good. While a majority of parents and senior students believed that the school provided a good range of clubs and activities, more than a few parents and students disagreed. Similarly, a few parents and students indicated that the homework given was not suitable. A majority of parents and students agreed that school leaders listened to their opinions about the school, but a few parents and more than a few students disagreed that this was so. A majority of parents indicated involvement in the life of the school, but a few indicated that they were not involved. Most parents found the meetings with teachers to be regular and helpful, but again a few did not. A majority of parents believed that inspection had led to improvements at the school. About a third of the senior students responded to the survey. Like the parents, their views about the school's provision were mostly positive. Only a small minority of teachers responded to the survey. Their views were very positive on all aspects of the school's work, but a few indicated that they were not involved in school improvement. Most teachers believed that inspection had helped them improve their teaching practices.

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.

Copyright © 2012

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school.
It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.