

INSPECTION REPORT

Al Ameen Private School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Ameen Private School

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Location | Al Nahda |
| Type of school | Private |
| Website | www.msbdubai.com |
| Telephone | 04-2677100 |
| Address | PO Box 94550, Al Nahda |
| Principal | Sadia Wajid |
| Curriculum | UK |
| Gender of students | Boys and Girls |
| Age / Grades or Year Groups | 3-16 / Kindergarten to Grade 11 |
| Attendance | Acceptable |
| Number of students on roll | 532 |
| Largest nationality group of Students | Indian |
| Number of Emirati students | 0 (0%) |
| Date of the inspection | 14th to 16th January 2013 |

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The context of the school

Al Ameen Private School, situated in Al Nahda, provided education for students aged three to 16 years. It was founded in 1985. There were 535 students on the school roll at the time of the inspection. The school followed the National Curriculum for England. Foundation Stage to Year 9 students undertook school-based tests. Students in Years 10 and 11 completed IGCSE examinations.

There were 45 full-time teachers with approximately a quarter being relatively new to the school. All teachers were qualified to teach their subjects. Five teaching assistants supported learning in the classrooms with a further two assistants responsible for providing support for students with special educational needs. Students were grouped in 22 classes with four in Foundation Stage, twelve in primary phase and six in secondary phase.

There were no Emirati students on the school roll. Students came from five main nationalities. No students were speakers of Arabic as a first language. The Principal was new in her role but had previously worked at the school for five years as head of the secondary phase.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- Students' outstanding attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science in the secondary phase;
- Outstanding assessment arrangements in the secondary phase;
- The high quality of health and safety arrangements across the school;
- Outstanding partnerships with parents and the community;
- The successful response made by the school to the recommendations from the last inspection.

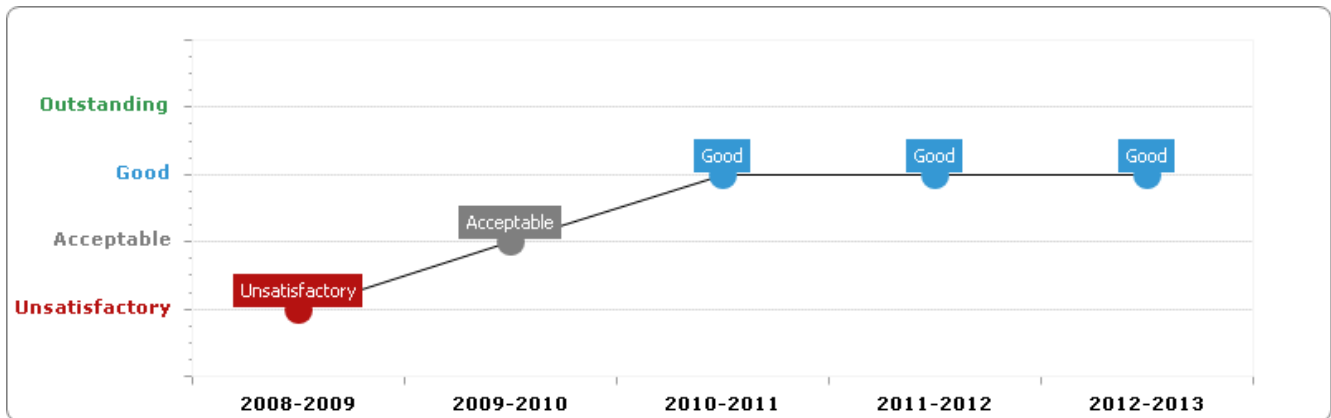
Recommendations

- Continue to improve the attainment and progress in Islamic Education in the secondary phase;
- Improve the provision in Foundation Stage by:
 - Planning lessons with a focus on learning, through play and investigation;
 - Ensuring the Foundation Stage curriculum provides opportunities for children to develop independence and make choices;
- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better across the school;
- Develop strategies to help children make a smooth transition from Foundation Stage into Year 1.

Progress since the last inspection

- Students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education had improved and was now good in the primary phase;
- There were many examples of students' scientific enquiry observed across the school including the primary phase. This was an improvement from the previous inspection;
- Most of the lessons observed in upper primary and secondary phases included well-planned activities that were carefully matched to the different learning needs of students. However, this was not always observed in Foundation Stage and the lower primary;
- Students sat various examinations which, when compared to world average results, indicated that the majority of students attained well above expectations in English, mathematics and science.

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--|------------------|---------|-----------|
| Attitudes and behaviour | Good | Good | Good |
| Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness | Good | Good | Good |
| Community and environmental responsibility | Good | Good | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---------|-------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable | Good | Good |
| Quality of students' learning | Acceptable | Good | Good |
| Assessment | Good | Good | Outstanding |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|
| Curriculum quality | Acceptable | Good | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Health and Safety | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Quality of Support | Good | Good | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

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 | Outstanding |
| Governance | Good |
| Management, including staffing, facilities and resources | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

In Foundation Stage and primary, attainment was good in all subjects. In the secondary phase, attainment was acceptable in Islamic Education, good in Arabic as an additional language and outstanding in English, mathematics and science. In Islamic Education almost all students had good knowledge about the key principles of faith and worship in Islam. Attainment levels of most secondary students were in line with curriculum expectations. In Arabic as an additional language, most students' skills in listening and speaking were stronger than those for reading and writing. In English, younger students were able to communicate well with each other, understand instructions and read and write simple sentences. From Year 3 onwards, the rate of acquisition of language skills increased markedly. Students became fluent readers and were able to write with great confidence in different styles. Speaking, critical and higher order thinking skills were developed exceptionally well in the upper secondary phase. In mathematics, most students built a secure knowledge and understanding of number and shape across the Foundation Stage and primary phase. At secondary, almost all students developed a very good grasp of algebra and were able to apply their knowledge to solve real world problems. In science, primary students related theory to everyday examples and their practical skills were strong by the end of the primary phase. Students confidently planned their practical experiments without guidance from the teacher in the secondary phase. Results exceeded National Curriculum for England averages at the end of key stage assessments and were especially strong when benchmarked against world averages in external assessments.

Overall, progress was good in primary. In Foundation Stage it was good except in mathematics where it was acceptable. In secondary, progress was outstanding in English, mathematics and science, good in Arabic as an additional language and acceptable in Islamic Education. Students' recitation skills were better developed than other skills in the various aspects of Islamic Education. However, progress slowed because students were not able to memorise longer chapters of The Holy Qur'an. In Arabic as an additional language, students' skills across the school in extended and free writing were underdeveloped and limited to a few words or short sentences. In English, there were weaknesses with younger children's understanding and use of phonics because teachers did not always reproduce the correct letter sounds. Progress in English was slower in the lower primary phase because challenge levels were inappropriate. Progress in mathematics strengthened as students moved up through the school and were given more responsibility for their own learning. Progress in science accelerated in the upper primary as students became more independent and was especially strong throughout the secondary year groups. Throughout the school, students with special educational needs made progress that was broadly in line with their peers.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Almost all students made a strong commitment to school life. They showed positive and responsible attitudes to all their school activities but especially the high expectations they set for themselves in lessons. Almost all students had a good understanding of healthy living and followed the school's advice on keeping fit and well. Attendance was acceptable and almost all students arrived in school on time. The student council was in place but roles and responsibilities were unclear and impact was minimal. Across the school most students demonstrated a clear understanding of Islamic values and respected and appreciated Islamic traditions. They were able to discuss issues related to Islam and showed a strong sense of tolerance and respect for other people. Most students had a clear understanding and appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai. They were aware of the importance of other cultures and showed a strong appreciation of their Indian heritage. Most students had a good understanding of community and environmental issues. Almost all children in Foundation Stage kept their work and play areas tidy and clean. Across the school students had a very good understanding of the need to preserve the school environment and took part in activities to improve it. This was reflected in the many displays of project work around the school.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable in Foundation Stage and good in both primary and secondary. Most teachers demonstrated secure and enthusiastic subject knowledge. Lessons were planned in detail taking account of differences in both student ability and learning styles. In some lessons plans were well modified, to take account of developments from the previous lessons. Learning objectives were shared with students at the beginning of lessons and often reviewed to check for understanding at the end. The best lessons observed provided students with responsibility for their own learning and encouraged them to develop their critical thinking skills. In the few less effective lessons, teachers demonstrated weak class management skills or dominated a lesson with too much teacher talk and insufficient student activity.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable at Foundation Stage and good at both primary and secondary. In a few lessons in English, mathematics and science, learning was outstanding. Students were well motivated and demonstrated an impressively high level of engagement and enjoyment in their lessons. Technology was effectively used by students, to support learning and to develop their key research skills, both within lessons and at home. In subjects such as science and mathematics, students

could relate their learning to a wide range of real world applications. When given the opportunity students collaborated well with each other. Secondary students acted as critical friends when supporting and challenging each other in group discussions. Learning was weaker when students were given insufficient opportunity for either independent problem solving or meaningful group participation.

Assessment was outstanding in secondary and good elsewhere. The school had developed rigorous systems for monitoring students' progress and their attainment against National Curriculum levels and IGCSE international standards. These systems were used successfully by leaders to identify trends in attainment and individual progress within a year group. This enabled the school to deploy appropriate intervention strategies for students not making expected progress. For example, booster classes in English, mathematics and science were provided for upper secondary students in order that they achieve the highest grade possible. In the majority of classes, assessment was a daily part of learning. There were many examples in the good lessons seen where students' work was scrutinised and high-quality feedback given so that students understood their next steps in learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable in Foundation Stage and good in primary and secondary. Planning for younger children was based upon a thematic approach; it did not pay sufficient attention to regular child-initiated learning through play and to the teaching of phonics. Primary curriculum planning was based more firmly on the National Curriculum for England and the use of levels was widely used. In secondary, the lack of a broader choice of subject options, especially in art and humanities, and a lack of sporting activities throughout the school, meant that the needs of all students were not always met. Regular curriculum review was regular using assessment information to adapt it required. There were a large number of theme weeks, field trips and after-school activities to enrich the curriculum. In the secondary phase independent learning, debate and research skills were strong features and there were frequent opportunities for students to develop their presentation skills.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety arrangements were outstanding in all phases of the school. The school prioritised all aspects of health and safety. Security, cleanliness and maintenance of the building was excellent. The supervision of students at breaks was diligent. Procedures for the clinic and transportation were highly

efficient and records were detailed. All fire equipment and first aid boxes were regularly maintained and checked. The introduction of healthy lunchboxes and the regular health checks and talks by the school nurse ensured that this was given a high profile. Child protection arrangements were secure and all staff members were trained in recognition and referral procedures.

The quality of support was good across the school. There were good behaviour management systems in place. There was particularly good support for students regarding career guidance. Staff-student relationships were very positive and a great sense of mutual respect and trust existed. Monitoring of students' well-being and personal development was managed with a high degree of commitment by the co-ordinators who knew each student exceptionally well. Systems to monitor students' attendance were securely in place but the school did not have any clearly defined strategies to encourage higher levels of student attendance.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school admitted and supported students with special educational needs. The support staff and co-ordinator provided advice to teachers about how to assist students and help them progress at the same rate as other students. Individual education plans included appropriate steps to support learning and relevant targets were agreed and reviewed with parents. The student profiles were detailed and provided evidence of progression. The school also used individualised monitoring as well as the school tracking system to monitor progress.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was good. Senior and middle managers provided a clear sense of direction for the school. They were dedicated and promoted a school community that worked in harmony and had high expectations of all its students. The Principal shared responsibilities with the staff and was effective in achieving high standards of learning. Managers and departmental teams met regularly to plan, discuss and review their work. Senior leaders were aware that further improvements were needed and demonstrated sufficient capacity to make the required improvements.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The school had developed a wide range of strategies to monitor and evaluate its work, involving staff at all levels. The whole school self-evaluation document was concise but some of the school's judgements of its performance were not realistic and did

not always match what was happening. The school's action plans and priorities were relevant and reviewed regularly. As a result, good progress was made in addressing the last report's recommendations. The school's partnership with parents was outstanding. Parents felt welcomed, valued and encouraged to participate in their children's education. They were well informed of general school matters and of issues that related specifically to their children's education. They valued the information from progress reports and parents' meetings. The parents valued the links with universities and with companies that provided work experience. Parents felt consulted and fully involved in decision-making.

Governance of the school was good. Governors provided strategic guidance to the school and held the leadership to account for its performance by monitoring the impact of the school's work. They made a significant contribution to the leadership by providing good support to the newly-appointed Principal through regular formal and informal meetings. The governing body included representation from local businesses and parents but no teachers or students were included.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. The day-to-day life of the school was managed very efficiently by dedicated staff. All staff members were suitably qualified and a good programme of professional development was in place. The facilities and resources were sufficient to support the curriculum and the library was adequately stocked. Laboratory equipment was appropriately maintained. A number of the classrooms were too small to allow teachers to plan activities that involved students moving around, particularly in Foundation Stage. The numbers of children in each of the classes in Foundation Stage did not comply with local regulations.

[View judgements](#)

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 | 122 | 35% |
| | Last year | 172 | 46% |
| Teachers | 30 | | 67% |
| Students | 4 | | 24% |

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

Only a minority of parents and a few students responded to the survey, while a majority of teachers did so. Almost all parents, students and teachers who responded were very pleased with the quality of education provided by the school. They thought it was well led and that they were involved appropriately in school decision-making. They thought that the school ensured good quality communication and that students were progressing well in all of their subjects. All teachers, most parents and half of the students thought that subject choices were good and that teachers helped their students improve their learning. They thought that the school looked after students' needs well. Students felt safe and enjoyed coming to school. They felt that if they raised any points of concern that these would be addressed. All teachers felt that they were a part of an effective team. All parents, students and teachers agreed that the school welcomed students with special educational needs.

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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