

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Al Ameen Private School

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## 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, Dubai
Principal	Fatima Martin
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	496
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	23rd January to 25th January 2012

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## The context of the school

Al Ameen Private School, situated in Al Nahda, provided education for students aged 3 to 16 years. It was founded in 1985. There were 496 students on the school roll at the time of the inspection.

The school offered a modified English National Curriculum. Foundation Stage to Year 9 students undertook school based tests. Students in Years 10 and 11 completed IGCSE examinations.

There were thirty-six full-time teachers with approximately a third being relatively new to the school. Almost all teachers were suitably qualified to teach their subjects. Five teaching assistants supported learning in the classroom with a further assistant responsible for providing learning support.

There were no Emirati students on the school roll. Students came from five nationalities. None were speakers of Arabic as a first language. The Principal was in her fifth year in post.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

## How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Al Ameen Private School provided a good quality of education and had improved since the last inspection. The Principal and her senior management team had led the school exceptionally well. They had driven forward improvements, particularly through astute recruitment of staff and focused teachers' professional development and review. As a result, the quality of students' education continued to be enhanced in almost all areas. The exception was Islamic Education where students' attainment and progress had declined and was now acceptable. Team building initiatives had helped the school integrate new staff while clear leadership responsibilities and inclusive school ethos was empowering middle managers, and other staff and students to be innovative in their delegated tasks.

The school had made good progress towards addressing the previous reports' recommendations. Improvement initiatives had increased students' research, enquiry and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, particularly in English and mathematics. Senior students had more options in GCSE subjects. The school identified special educational needs (SEN) students and those with special talents more effectively but this required further development. The progress of Foundation Stage children in English was now outstanding as were secondary stage students' attainment and progress in English,

mathematics and science. Across the stages, students now had outstanding economic and environmental understanding. The school's arrangements for health and safety were also outstanding.

## Key strengths

- The significant improvements in attainment and progress of students in English, mathematics and science at the secondary stage and in students' progress in English at the Foundation Stage;
- The very positive attitudes of students towards learning and their outstanding behaviour across all phases of the school;
- Students' highly developed understanding of sustainability in relation to the economic and environmental issues affecting Dubai;
- The use of assessment at the Foundation Stage, particularly to inform teaching to meet individual students' needs;
- The consistently high quality of provision for health and safety.

## Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education;
- Develop students' independence in planning scientific enquiry, particularly at the primary stages of the school;
- Ensure that activities in lessons consistently meet students' individual learning needs in the primary and secondary stages;
- Develop more effective strategies to measure students' attainment and progress against international standards.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
<b>Islamic Education</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good
<b>English</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding
<b>Mathematics</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Outstanding
<b>Science</b>			
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Outstanding

Most students attained at acceptable levels in Islamic Education. Almost all students knew chapters of the Holy Qur'an and used recitation rules well. Most could memorise the five pillars of Islam. However, only a few understood the meaning of what they were learning and had only a basic knowledge about the Prophet's Seerah. Students' attainment in Arabic as an additional language was good in Primary and Secondary where almost all students read well for understanding and developed good independent

writing skills. Students' attainment in English across the school was good resulting in confident communicators in what was often an additional language for most students. In Primary, most students achieved above expected levels in their knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics and science in lessons. They were particularly confident in discussing mathematical and scientific concepts. Foundation Stage children could identify and use simple numbers to play a variety of mathematical games. Students were skilled in applying their language, mathematical and scientific knowledge and problem-solving skills in real-life situations. Older students achieved excellent results in English, mathematics and science in IGCSE.

Progress in Islamic Education was acceptable but impeded by the lack of understanding of the recitation verses from the Holy Qur'an. Almost all students learning Arabic as an additional language made good progress across all four skills of language including creative writing. Students in Foundation Stage made rapid progress in their English skills but this slowed in Primary to become good. Nevertheless progress improved again in upper grades and led to excellent performance in external examinations. Students made good progress in their acquisition and use of scientific and mathematical skills in the Foundation Stage and Primary. The progress of students with special educational needs was in line with their peers across all subjects inspected.

### How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good. Students behaved very well in school and had very good relationships with peers, staff and visitors. Students' work ethic was excellent and they led aspects of learning with enthusiasm and skill. Most students made positive healthy living choices, including healthy

eating and keeping fit. However, their attendance was only acceptable. Students' understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture were good. Almost all appreciated Islamic values and their impact on contemporary society. They made good links between Islam and many of the local UAE traditions. Most students understood the importance of respecting other cultures and religions. Students' civic, economic and environmental awareness was outstanding. Their responsibilities included participating in a students' council and four committees which enabled them to share their opinions and ideas with leaders and bring about changes in the school. Most students had a very good grasp of concepts relating to economy; they explained key features that had driven Dubai's development such as trade, tourism and real estate. Students' knowledge and commitment to the environment was well developed.

### How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

The quality of teaching for effective learning was good across the school, with examples of outstanding practice particularly in English and mathematics. Most teachers had secure subject-knowledge and used new technology well for teaching purposes. Teachers' planning and lesson preparation were good. Teachers explained new topics and concepts well to their students. In most lessons, teachers' questioning encouraged extended talk from students, who were able to justify and give reasons for their answers. In a minority of lessons, however, questioning was not used effectively enough to enable students to think more deeply about the subject matter. A majority of teachers provided detailed learning objectives and activities, which met students' needs and interests well. However, the use of different approaches to meet students' individual learning needs was inconsistent across subjects.

The quality of students' learning was good across the school and in English and mathematics it was outstanding in a few lessons. In the Foundation Stage, there was a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning and children often chose their play activities. When given the opportunity, students

worked well collaboratively, took responsibility for their own progress and acted as extra learning resources for each other. In Arabic, for example, learning was reinforced well when students were required to explain their ideas to their peers. In a majority of lessons, in mathematics for example, learning was complemented by activities and problem-solving assignments which were linked to real-life situations and students' own experiences. Learning was sometimes hindered when students had insufficient opportunities to lead activities or to take decisions about their learning. In a minority of lessons, there were insufficient activities to foster students' investigative and enquiry skills, particularly in primary science.

The quality of assessment was good overall. The school had improved the use of assessment to measure students' progress but had only partially moderated this against international standards. Staff made outstanding use of assessment in the Foundation Stage. This was regular, ongoing and had led to modifications in lesson planning to meet the needs of individuals. In the primary and secondary stages marking was regular and accurate. Students often assessed their own work and that of their peers, and formulated their own targets for improvement. Most knew the levels at which they were working and understood how to improve. However, teachers at the primary and secondary stages did not always use assessment information well enough to modify their teaching or set tasks to meet students' varying learning needs.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

The curriculum was good. At the Foundation Stage there was a very well planned integrated, thematic approach. The secondary curriculum had been expanded to include IGCSE courses in English as a first language, travel and tourism and physical education. Internal transition arrangements were outstanding but were only acceptable as students transferred to their next schools. The development of cross-curricular and work experience links was commendable and improved students' learning experiences. There were excellent courses in English and mathematics. The Arabic and science curricula were good. However, in Islamic Education the curriculum was just acceptable because of insufficient coverage of key areas in the Ministry of Education (MoE) programme. External visits and field trips offered students a real world experience which supported their learning well. Assemblies helped develop students' presentation skills. Recent initiatives supported independent learning, research and critical thinking, particularly in mathematics and English. Developing e-learning links with schools beyond Dubai, offered international

experiences for students. Initiatives introduced to challenge higher attaining students included an after-school creative writing club and senior students' participation in a Young Leaders conference.

## 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

Arrangements to ensure health and safety within the school were outstanding. The school provided a safe, hygienic and secure environment for learning. All safety equipment was properly maintained with regular fire drills, careful monitoring and up-to-date record keeping. Building maintenance was also carefully monitored, including risk assessments, and necessary works were put into place to maintain the good condition of the buildings. Staff took care in supervising students throughout the premises. Very good safety arrangements were in place for school transport and for parents bringing children to and collecting children from school. Healthy living was built into the curriculum and promoted in the life of the school. All staff were trained in and had written procedures for first aid and for child protection.

The quality of support was good. Staff-student relationships across the school were very good and almost all students worked well with teachers. An effective positive behaviour management policy was in place and students behaved well in school. The school had appropriate systems to monitor attendance and ensured the care and welfare of students. Career advice was made available to Year 8 students prior to IGCSE option choices. The school made provision for a small number of students with identified additional needs and provided learning support in reading and mathematics. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with special educational needs were used effectively to track progress and communicate with both students and their parents. However, the school did not make sufficient provision for gifted and talented students, both in classroom activities and, more generally, across the educational experience of these individuals.

## 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

The high quality leadership shown by the Principal and her senior management team had led to better distribution of leadership responsibilities throughout the school, which had led to an improved capacity for improvement. Almost all middle managers had made a good start to leading improvements within their departments. Regular communication and a shared sense of common purpose to deliver the school's aims ensured all staff had a good awareness of the strengths of the school and what was required to ensure continuous improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Senior managers monitored and evaluated a wide range of school activities leading to a more consistent approach to measuring school improvement. They knew the school well and regular formal meetings had raised individual and team capacities to evaluate their own work as well as the impact of agreed school priorities on student outcomes. The school had developed a professional development programme which was tailored to the needs of staff and informed by a regular system of staff performance and review. Good progress had been made in meeting the recommendations of the last inspection.

The school regularly gathered the views of parents and acted upon these. Leaders and teachers provided parents with high quality information about their children's progress and more generally on the work of the school. Parents had benefited from training to help them understand teaching and curricular innovations and to support their children's learning. In turn, parents were very supportive of the school, including helping with its social and extra-curricular events. These strong partnerships enhanced the learning experiences of students. The school also had very productive links with the local community which further enhanced students' learning.

The Board of Governors held the school to account for standards and provided it with regular support. The membership of the Board included parental representation and there was a strong focus on ensuring that members had a range of skills which would support the school. However, no-one on the Board had specific responsibility for monitoring the key educational impact of its work. The Board had strong informal links with the wider parent body as well as gathering parental views through the school web-site.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources were good. The school was very well managed at senior level and the skills of middle managers were developing well at almost all levels of the school. A dedicated administrative team supported leaders with efficient day-to-day management of the school, its systems and processes. The school facilities were adequate and an attractive and stimulating use of display celebrated students' work and informed learning. Students were benefiting from recent increases in ICT resources to support their learning.

## 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	161	41%
	Last year	131	40%
Teachers	17		49%
Students	13		37%

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

Minorities of parents, teachers and students responded to their surveys. Almost all parents and all students and teachers who responded to the survey were very happy with the quality of education provided by the school. They thought that 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. Most parents and almost all 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 part of an effective team.

## 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](mailto: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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