

INSPECTION REPORT

Regent International School

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Regent International School

Location	The Greens
Type of school	Private
Website	www.risdubai.com
Telephone	04 360 8830
Address	PO Box 24857, Dubai
Principal	Shankuntala Mankani
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-16 / Foundation Stage to Year 11
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	956
Number of Emirati students	3 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	19th to 21st March 2012

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The context of the school

Located in The Greens, Regent International School is a private school providing education for boys and girls aged three to 16, from Foundation Stage to Year 11. The school offered a UK curriculum with older students studying for International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations in Years 10 and 11. The school implemented UK assessment procedures, including the Early Years Foundation Stage profiles. In the later years of the school, students' attainment was assessed using the UK curriculum standards.

At the time of inspection, there were 956 students on the roll. About 70 nationalities were represented, including Emirati students. There were 47 students for whom Arabic was a first language. The school had 77 staff members, including senior managers, teachers and 32 teaching assistants. Although almost all teachers held a first degree, a few did not have a recognised teaching qualification. There were 33 staff members new to the school this year. The school's Director, the Head of Primary and the Head of Secondary were in their second years at the school.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Regent International School continued to provide a good quality holistic education for its students. There was an extremely safe, caring and challenging environment for students. Students' behaviour, self-discipline, consideration for others and attitudes to learning were outstanding. The curriculum was broad and balanced, but there was scope for improved attainment in Islamic Education, Arabic as a first language and secondary science. In other key subjects, students' attainment and progress were good. The school maintained its outstanding levels of support for students, as well as its good provision for their health and safety, its links with parents and its overall leadership.

The recommendations in the previous inspection report focused on teaching for effective learning as well as distributed leadership and broader representation in governance. The quality of teaching had improved and was good overall, with some that was outstanding; however, there was some variability across the

school. The school had provided professional development for teachers, had improved self-evaluation and assessment arrangements, and had developed expanded curriculum teams. The curriculum teams had been partially successful but lacked clearly defined leadership roles. Progression, transitions between phases and continuity in all key subjects still required attention. A greater community and staff representation had improved governance arrangements. Overall, the energetic school leaders and middle management demonstrated the capacity and commitment to support on-going improvement.

Key strengths

- The continued improvement in the quality and consistency of students' progress across the school;
- Students' outstanding behaviour, self-discipline, consideration for others and attitudes towards learning;
- Improved teaching for effective learning, which was at least good in a majority of lessons;
- The outstanding quality of support provided for all students;
- The provision for health and safety which was good with some outstanding features.

Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language, Islamic Education, secondary Arabic as an additional language and secondary science, with a timetable for progress and agreed criteria for success;
- Ensure that planning and teaching are enhanced by more consistent use of assessment information so that the needs of different groups of learners are met;
- Ensure that school leaders at all levels are involved in planning and decision making, and have clear accountability for the improvement of students' learning;
- Ensure compliance with Ministry of Education requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language in the weekly timetable.

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

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

Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language were acceptable in both the primary and secondary phases. It was acceptable in secondary Arabic as an additional language but good in the primary phase. In Islamic Education, the recitation skills of most students across the two phases were in line with curriculum expectations. In Arabic, most students had good listening skills and responded well to their teachers' instructions. Attainment was good in English and mathematics throughout all phases. It was good

in the Foundation Stage and primary science, but acceptable in secondary science. The majority of students could read with age-appropriate level of fluency and accuracy. In the Foundation Stage science, children gained an understanding of the world around them through exploring and observing. By Year 3 they could devise and carry out fair tests. The majority of students in secondary science classes attained knowledge, understanding and skills in line with international expectations.

Progress was good in primary and secondary Islamic Education, primary Arabic as an additional language and in English, mathematics and science across all three phases. Progress was acceptable in Arabic as a first language in the primary and secondary phases. The majority of students made good progress over time at or above international expectations. Students with special educational needs received support from the Individual Needs team. This helped them to make good progress in almost all subjects, except Arabic as a first language, where their progress was acceptable. In this subject, teachers did not adapt the curriculum content and teaching methods to meet students' needs.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

Students' outstanding behaviour, self-discipline, consideration for others and attitudes towards learning were strengths of the school. Students were respectful towards each other and their teachers. Their work ethic was excellent and they were able to engage successfully in independent work. While many aspects of students' lifestyles were healthy, not all brought healthy snacks and lunches to school. Attendance over the most recent full term was acceptable. This required improvement to ensure that all students benefited from the school's educational programmes. Most students demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic values and their effect upon contemporary society in Dubai. The school ensured the application of Islamic values in students' lives through a range of activities such as lectures, workshops and charity events. Students appreciated the local traditions and heritage and the positive aspects of Dubai's multi-cultural society. Students had a clear understanding of their civic roles through the student council. They contributed to the community through activities, lectures and trips. They had good knowledge and understanding of Dubai's economic and social development. They had a strong understanding of environmental sustainability and most were aware of key environmental issues. Displays of students' recycling project work enhanced the schools corridors.

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	Good	Good	Good

Teaching was good across the school. Almost all teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge and the majority exhibited well-developed understanding of age-appropriate pedagogy. There were secure systems of lesson planning across all subjects with the better lessons having clear objectives and success criteria that met the learning needs of individual students. Teacher-student interactions were good in almost every lesson. Most teachers engaged students using appropriate teaching strategies such as practical activities, debates, independent group work and discussions, thus addressing students' different learning styles. Most teachers demonstrated sound questioning skills, but only the best teachers challenged students to think critically. In less successful lessons, inflexible planning coupled with poor time management led to lower levels of learning. While teaching for effective learning had improved across the school since the last inspection, there was still too much variability in quality.

Teaching in other subjects was at least good overall. The lessons seen in French, physical education, technology and creative and performing arts were well planned. Teachers provided a range of age-appropriate activities which ensured high levels of student engagement, enjoyment and learning.

The quality of students' learning was good across the school. Most students were engaged, keen to learn and excited when participating. They enjoyed being at school. Most had a growing awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and could reflect on their achievements. In the better lessons, almost all students collaborated effectively. Expressive skills were good, with most able to talk about their learning needs. In a few very strong lessons, dialogue between most students and their teachers was a key feature. The application of learning to different contexts was a developing skill. In the majority of good lessons, students worked with relative independence and improved their critical thinking skills through the

questioning and evaluation of learning. Most students were able to articulate their views and understand the views of others. Enquiry-based learning across all subjects was underdeveloped.

The quality of assessment was good across all phases of the school. There were effective assessment practices for monitoring students' progress and some students were involved in assessing some aspects of their own or others learning. However, this self- and peer- assessment did not consistently recognise learning gains or help students improve. Teachers' oral feedback in most lessons was of high quality and they had good knowledge of individual students' strengths and weaknesses. Most teachers marked students' work regularly, offering positive feedback. But often the feedback did not clearly indicate the next steps required for improvement. Assessment data was accurate, detailed and skillfully analysed. However, in too many lessons, data were used inconsistently to clarify high quality learning objectives; therefore, students did not have a clear enough understanding of their progress.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

The curriculum was good across all phases of the school. The Foundation Stage operated a highly effective, child-initiated programme that incorporated both indoor and outdoor learning, thus meeting the Early Years learning goals. In the primary and early secondary years, the curriculum was broad and balanced and was enhanced by a modern foreign language, physical education, technology and creative and performing arts. Curriculum teams had been partially successful in improving the detail in planning but the lack of a defined leader restricted their overall progress. Good plans were in place for curriculum review to further improve provision to meet the needs of all students, and to ensure curriculum compliance in Islamic Education and Arabic. Progression, transitions between phases and continuity in all key subjects still required attention. There was a vibrant programme of extra-curricular activities, school visits and events to provide for students' social, emotional, physical and personal development. Parents expressed appreciation of both extra-curricular activities and events such as International Day. However the school did not provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking.

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

Health and safety provision was good across all phases of the school. Embedded policies and procedures ensured a high level of student safety. Staff members were well aware of their responsibilities and school leaders actively monitored all student arrivals and departures. Students expressed confidence in the school's safety systems. Foundation Stage children enjoyed the range of equipment and resources available, and primary students eagerly anticipated the completion of their new facilities. A few senior students reported that the library resources were insufficient. All routine evacuation drills and safety audits had been performed efficiently. Medical staff members were vigilant and ensured accurate record keeping and the secure storage of pharmaceuticals. They supported the school's healthy living programme. Child protection arrangements were clearly defined and implemented.

The quality of support for students was outstanding across the school. The pastoral system was strong and built on a highly supportive network starting with home-room teachers. Students understood the school's high expectations for behaviour and unacceptable incidents were rare. Staff members had a clear picture of every student's development through extensive systems for monitoring and recording progress, and used it to provide focused guidance on how to improve. The Individual Needs team was diligent in assessing students and quickly identifying those with special needs or those for whom English was an additional language. The distinction between the different needs of these students was less evident in classroom lessons. At times they did not make as much progress as when working in groups in the Individual Needs department. Systems to monitor attendance and punctuality provided the school with an accurate picture of students' absence and lateness.

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 quality of leadership was good. The senior leadership team was energetic and responsive. They articulated a clear, holistic vision and were determined to forge ahead with multiple improvements. The school was beginning to strengthen its sense of purpose by sharing its vision with students and parents. Senior leaders knew the school well and had set in place many effective systems that had led to better teaching and learning. Middle management had been strengthened through additional recruitment and some clarification of roles, but more clarity was required in curriculum leadership. Middle managers were well placed to support the senior leaders in strategic planning to enhance the school's journey of improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Senior managers continued to develop their strong understanding of the school and its needs. Teachers audited their own practices, and students' and parents' views were sought through questionnaires. These procedures for self-evaluation enabled a comprehensive overview. The school's final self-evaluation document was robust. It was developed through solid analysis and evaluation; it was well presented and of high quality. Leaders had shrewdly redeveloped the school improvement plan, populating it with ambitious yet workable targets. They had introduced a comprehensive and accurate annual performance management programme for staff, although there was not enough focus on the learning outcomes for students. The recommendations of the previous report had been adequately addressed.

The partnerships with parents and the community were good. The school had extended and improved its links with parents, making very good use of electronic communication. It regularly sought the views of parents and kept them informed using newsletters, weekly bulletins and e-mail messaging. It promptly informed parents of behavioural issues. The Foundation Stage and primary phase had monthly parents' drop-in meetings. Each class had a parent representative on the parents' association. Five comprehensive

school reports were supported by parents' consultation meetings. While reports provided information on students' progress, as well as improvement strategies, some parents of primary students found them difficult to interpret. The school was developing a higher profile in the local and wider community with increased links with local businesses.

Governance of the school had improved and was good. An advisory board with a good range of community, parent and staff representatives had been formally constituted. Meeting once per term, they advised the Governing Board on improvements. They also monitored and evaluated the school, holding it to account through target-setting and students' attainment results. However, the Governing Board had not ensured that the school had fulfilled all of its statutory requirements.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources, was good. The day-to-day management of the school was effective, efficient and robust. Teachers and students were well informed of daily and weekly events. The school supported new teachers very well, and met most of the professional development needs through well-judged training. Teachers were well qualified academically; however, not all had an appropriate teaching qualification. The school was effectively addressing this through in-house training. Facilities and resources were generally good and plans for further improvements were well advanced. Weaknesses and remedial actions had been identified in the school improvement document. The lack of classroom-based technology and resources had been addressed since the last inspection; however, their use by students to support and enrich their classroom learning was not sufficient.

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	138	20%
	Last year	160	27%
Teachers	33		42%
Students	10		30%

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

A minority of parents responded to this year's survey, a slightly smaller proportion than the previous year. Almost half of the teachers but a smaller percentage of senior students responded to their surveys. Parents were much more positive about their children's progress in Islamic Education, Arabic as a first language, and Arabic as an additional language than in the previous year. A similar, more positive view was evident regarding English, mathematics, science and the quality of teaching. Almost all parents stated that their children enjoyed the school. Overall, students were happy with almost all aspects of the school, although more than half reported that the range of subjects offered was limited. Almost all teachers believed that a high quality of education was offered and that inspections had helped the school to improve.

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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