

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Rajagiri International School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Rajagiri International School

Location	Al Warqa'a
Type of school	Private
Website	www.risdubai.org
Telephone	04-2800691
Address	PO Box 62012, Dubai
Principal	Fr. Varghese Puthusserry
Curriculum	Indian (CBSE)
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-11 / Kindergarten to Grade 5
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1,059
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	Monday 10th to Thursday 13th October 2011

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## The context of the school

Rajagiri International School, located in Al Warqa'a, is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Grade 5, aged three to 11 years. The school follows an Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum.

There were 68 full-time teachers, including the Principal, Vice-Principal and Headmistress. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications and had undertaken recent professional development. Staff turnover in the school was high and one-third had been teaching in the school for less than one year. Students were grouped in 41 classes with an average class size of 26 students. All students were of Indian descent. Approximately two per cent had been identified by the school as having some form of special educational need (SEN). All of those students received additional support from specialists.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

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

The Rajagiri International School provided a good quality of education. It had some outstanding features, including attainment and progress in English in all phases and mathematics in the primary phase. Students' attitudes and behaviour as well as their respect for Islam, appreciation of culture, community involvement and environmental understanding were outstanding in the primary phase. Health and safety provision and the school's partnership with parents were all outstanding. The quality of support, including support for students with special educational needs, was good.

The quality of teaching and learning was good, with some outstanding practice evident as well as some lessons which were inadequate. The school offered strong support to the significant number of teachers who had joined the school in the last year. Assessment of learning was good but further effort was needed to provide students with detailed feedback about their work and what they need to do to improve. Weaknesses in teaching, learning, curriculum, leadership and management in Arabic and Islamic Education were evident throughout the inspection. Since the last inspection, a number of initiatives had been taken to improve these areas. The determination and commitment of the Principal and his senior team had impacted positively on the success of the school.

## Key strengths

- Students' progress and attainment in English, and mathematics in the primary phase;
- Students' outstanding behaviour and their positive relationships with their teachers;
- Students' respect for Islam, appreciation of culture, community involvement and environmental understanding in the primary phase;
- The quality of support, protection and encouragement for healthy living given to students;
- The school's partnership with parents.

## Recommendations

- Improve teaching, learning, curriculum, leadership and management in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Continue to share good practice in teaching and learning to raise the proportion of good and outstanding lessons;
- Further develop assessment to provide students with more detailed feedback about their work and what they need to do to improve;
- Ensure greater consistency in the identification, support and progress of students with special educational needs.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary
<b>Islamic Education</b>		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
<b>English</b>		
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Mathematics</b>		
Attainment	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Good	Outstanding
<b>Science</b>		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good

Attainment in the Kindergarten was outstanding in English and good in mathematics and science. In the primary phase, attainment was outstanding in English and mathematics, good in science and Islamic Education, but only acceptable in Arabic. In Arabic, students' abilities to express themselves orally and in writing were not sufficiently well developed and, in Islamic Education, students had difficulty applying Islamic values to their own lives. English was outstanding in the Kindergarten because independent writing

skills were very well developed and children spoke confidently and clearly. In the primary phase it was outstanding in English because most students were able to write at length, with accurate spelling, to communicate feelings and expressions using a wide range of vocabulary. In mathematics, in the primary phase, students were skilled in identifying, comparing, sequencing and applying numbers. In science they were able to undertake practical experiments, predict outcomes and draw accurate conclusions from fair testing.

In the Kindergarten, progress was outstanding in English and good in mathematics and science. Progress in the primary phase was outstanding in English and mathematics, good in science and acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic. Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress overall, but their progress was variable. At times, teachers provided tasks which did not build well on students' prior learning and consequently this did allow all students to make sufficient progress.

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

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

Students demonstrated outstanding attitudes towards their learning, engaged in their work with enthusiasm. They listened and responded well. Their behavior was exemplary; they supported one another well, were sensitive to the needs of others and were extremely respectful to adults. They demonstrated the highest levels of self-discipline, had excellent understanding of healthy living and demonstrated tremendous respect and appreciation for Islam. Primary students had excellent understanding of the Islamic values and teaching. Their awareness and appreciation of local culture were well developed, particularly amongst older students. Students showed great pride in being citizens of Dubai and expressed genuine commitment to its future and development. Primary students had excellent ideas on how they could contribute to its future success. Students readily took on roles of responsibility, especially in the primary phase. Awareness of both local and global environmental issues was outstanding in primary. Economic understanding and responsibility by younger students were less well developed.

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

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

The quality of teaching for effective learning was good. Most teachers had good subject knowledge, planned their lessons well and used good questioning techniques to direct lessons to their learning objectives. Most teachers were good at recapping what had been taught in previous lessons, identifying previous knowledge and building on it for effective learning. Teachers enjoyed successful working relationships with their students; engaging and motivating them, showing respect and valuing their efforts. Resources were used effectively to enhance learning, particularly in the Kindergarten, but students' use of information and communication technology (ICT) was limited. Although teachers expected students to take responsibility for their own learning, few consistently promoted collaborative and independent learning.

The quality of students' learning was good. Students were keen to learn and participated fully in lessons and extra activities. They were able to work well in groups and pairs, co-operating and sharing ideas and resources. They listened to teachers and demonstrated their skills by making connections to previous work. When given opportunities, students chose the best ways to complete tasks both in leading and supporting their peers. Students demonstrated proficiency in finding out new information, independence of thought and growing maturity, especially in assemblies.

The assessment of learning was good across the school. In the Kindergarten, teachers used assessment information skillfully to ensure students made good progress. In the primary classes, teachers used assessment information and direct questioning to check on students' knowledge and understanding. In addition, teachers used information gained from informal observations and project work to gauge students' progress. Although teachers gathered large amounts of assessment information, they did not always use it effectively to support lesson planning or personalise teaching for individual students. Teachers' marking was regular but did not consistently tell students what they needed to do to improve.



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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good

The school curriculum was broad, balanced and had a clear rationale. In the Kindergarten, the curriculum provided good progression and rich learning opportunities including practical, physical and creative experiences for all children. Literacy, numeracy and science components were well planned and regularly reviewed. Basic Arabic classes had recently been introduced to raise attainment in Arabic, but those lessons were not sharply focused on developing language skills. The curriculum promoted high levels of challenge, especially in writing English, and ensured appropriate transition into the primary phase. The primary curriculum included a good range of subjects which provided stimulating and meaningful contexts for learning. Discrete sessions in creative writing, drama, debate, guided and free reading helped enrich the curriculum. Assemblies, clubs and 'Activity Time' provided excellent opportunities for promoting environmental and civic understanding as well as developing students' creative and practical skills. The curriculum, however, did not consistently provide good opportunities for enquiry-based learning and the curriculum for Arabic and Islamic Education required further attention.

## How well does the school protect and support students?

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

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were outstanding. All staff members in the school took their duty of care seriously. Students felt absolutely safe and secure in the school. Clear expectations and very well established routines throughout the day and on the buses ensured the safety of students and adults. Arrangements for the health of the students were effective and monitored by the medical personnel. Medicines and students' personal records were kept securely. Fire drills were carried out at appropriate intervals. Healthy living was reflected in the curriculum and promoted in lessons. All staff members and students were fully aware of the arrangements for child protection.

The quality of support for students was good with some outstanding features. Relations between teachers and students were very good. Behavior was at a high standard and was very well managed. Students' well-being and personal circumstances were closely monitored and they received high-quality individual guidance and support. The checking of attendance and punctuality was very effective. Monitoring of and provision for students with special educational needs was generally good. Most of the identified students received good support from both class and specialist teachers and made acceptable progress overall. However, not all students with special educational needs had been identified and this meant that their needs were not being fully addressed.

### 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	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

The quality of leadership and management was good overall. The Principal provided strong leadership which was clearly focused on raising attainment within an environment of support and ambition. Senior staff members were competent and committed. They were aware of the strengths and weaknesses in mid-level management. All staff members had clear direction and a commitment to the ethos, values and vision of the school. The focus on improvement was clearly evidenced in the school's response to the recommendations of the last inspection report. Against a backdrop of high staff turnover, the school had worked extremely hard to maintain the quality of teaching and learning, as well as improve students' attainment and progress. The capacity to improve further was good.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Senior staff members and middle managers had a focused view on the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which they were addressing with determination. Improvement planning was particularly well considered but failed to give enough attention to raising the quality of teaching and learning in Arabic. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the school's self-evaluation documents accorded well with the findings of the inspection team. The monitoring

of teaching and learning in the classrooms had contributed to improvements but good and outstanding practices were not sufficiently shared across the school.

The school's partnership with parents and community was outstanding. Parents were highly supportive of the school and able to meet with the Principal, co-ordinators and class teachers about any matters of concern. They were actively encouraged to be partners in the education of their children and were supported through regular meetings and useful resources, such as a booklet on how to help with Arabic. Parent meetings, open houses, and 'sunshine' calls ensured that parents received regular, detailed and accurate information about the performance, progress and welfare of their children. Parents were supportive of the school's activities and the parents' council had regular meetings. The school had strong links with the community, including regular visits and visiting speakers.

Governance of the school was acceptable. The school had a governing body but, as reported after the last inspection, it was not representative of all major stakeholders. In particular, there were no parents on the board, although their views were known and acted upon. The governing body did hold the school accountable for its performance and ensured that the school met its commitments to parents. Members of the governing body were in the school most days, were influential in the work of the school and acted swiftly to address any identified weaknesses.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. Whilst teachers were suitably qualified, almost one-third had been in the school for less than a year. A significant team of teaching assistants and ancillary staff members insured the smooth running of the school. The premises were good, with attractive play areas for Kindergarten children, high quality swimming facilities and computer laboratories. There were still insufficient computers in the classrooms and this restricted opportunities for students to develop independent study and research skills.

## 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	608	65%
	Last year	510	75%
Teachers	20		30%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

A majority of parents responded to the survey, at a slightly lower rate than last year. Most expressed satisfaction with the 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. In Arabic as an additional language, a majority of parents indicated that progress was good, but about a third did not know and a few believed that progress was not good. On other aspects of provision parents held positive views about the school. Teachers who responded to the survey also held positive views about the school.

## 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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