

# Gulf Indian High School Inspection Report

Pre-Primary to Secondary

Report issued February 2011

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## Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report

**Outstanding** – exceptionally high quality of performance or practice.

**Good** – the expected level of quality for every school in Dubai.

**Acceptable** – the minimum level of acceptability required for Dubai. All key aspects of performance and practice in every school should meet or exceed this level.

**Unsatisfactory** – quality not yet at the level acceptable for schools in Dubai. Schools will be expected to take urgent measures to improve the quality of any aspect of their performance or practice that is judged at this level.

Gulf Indian High School was inspected in November 2010 as part of the regular inspection of all schools in Dubai. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated students' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on students' progress in Islamic Education (for Muslim students), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

## Basic information about the school

Located in Al Garhoud, Gulf Indian High School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from pre-primary to secondary, aged three to 18 years. The school follows a CBSE curriculum. Major changes had taken place in the staffing since the last inspection. One quarter of the teachers had been in the school for less than one year. At the time of the inspection, there were 2010 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents. In the survey parents expressed positive views about the school. Almost all were satisfied with the quality of education. Most said that they were proud that their children attended the school and that they were pleased with their progress. Most thought that the quality of teaching was good or better and it was a major strength of the school. The majority stated that their children enjoyed lessons and were enthusiastic about learning. Around half were satisfied with the extra-curricular activities. Almost all felt that the school kept their children safe. Almost all thought that the school communicated well with families with regular, informative reports and helpful meetings with teachers. Most felt that the school was well-led and that it had responded positively to the last inspection. A few said that they would have preferred their children to attend the morning session rather than the afternoon shift.

## How well does the school perform overall?

The Gulf Indian High School provided an acceptable quality of education. Over a period when there were significant changes in staffing, it had provided a positive response to the last inspection. It had an ambitious improvement plan and had made some progress in improving the curriculum, the teaching of English and the training for senior managers. However, there was much more to do. There had been no significant improvement in the teaching of Arabic or science. The Principal had the capacity to move the school forward, but he required more effective support from all senior and middle managers and the continued commitment of all teachers.

In Islamic Education students' attainment and progress were good. In English, mathematics and science, attainment and progress were acceptable. However, in Arabic, attainment and progress remained unsatisfactory. The personal and social development of students was outstanding. Students' behaviour and attitudes throughout the school were exemplary. Older students played an important role in helping younger students. Through exercising these roles, secondary students were developing leadership skills. In both primary and secondary, students had a very good understanding of, and respect for, Islam and how it guided life in the family and community. All students appreciated living in Dubai. Older students' economic and environmental understanding was outstanding. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was acceptable. The curriculum was also acceptable. It had been improved recently with the addition of extra-curricular activities. The school was safe and suitable procedures were in place to care for the health and safety of students. Staff provided a good level of support to most students. However, those with additional learning needs were provided with minimal support. All aspects of leadership and management of the school were acceptable overall.

## Key features of the school

- The outstanding attitudes and behaviour of students;
- Students' understanding of Islam and the way it impacts on their lives;
- The school's promotion of multi-cultural understanding;
- The development of secondary students' leadership skills through leading extra-curricular activities;
- The impact of the Principal in setting the strong moral purpose of the school.

## Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment and progress in Arabic;
- In mathematics, develop students' problem-solving skills and in science provide more opportunities for students to develop independent investigative skills;
- Throughout the school, improve teaching and learning by using a greater variety of teaching strategies which engage all students in developing their own learning;
- Broaden the curriculum by providing more creative and artistic opportunities for students;
- Improve the impact of class observations by developing a shared understanding throughout the school of good quality learning and teaching, and by focusing more on the effectiveness of students' learning.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were good in the primary and secondary School. Almost all students had a sound understanding of key religious values. They were able to apply their learning to their daily lives. For example, most students could say afternoon supplications. They knew about the rituals of Hajj and what Muslims do in Makkah when they perform their Hajj. They knew the good deeds in Islam. Students understood the impact of Islam on family life and the community. They understood their faith in depth and were aware of how faith relates to trade and business. Their knowledge about the rules of recitation was acceptable, and their application of the rules was good. Most students were able to apply the rules of recitation in reading The Holy Qur'an.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were unsatisfactory with both primary and secondary students. Only a minority of students understood and could name the different kinds of verbs. They also could not use verbs in sentences correctly. They did not know about synonyms. Few students could read paragraphs correctly. Although most students could identify the different kinds of letters and complete class exercises, they were not able to apply this knowledge in unfamiliar situations. Only a few students could draw on their knowledge of Arabic to form sentences on their own. They could not apply their knowledge of grammar in meaningful contexts, such as in class discussions or when expressing their opinions.

Attainment and progress in English were acceptable throughout the school. By the end of the pre-primary stage most children could follow instructions, match words with pictures pronounce words phonetically, form letters correctly and write neatly. At the primary school level, most students spoke in complete sentences, used dictionaries accurately and completed sentences using new vocabulary. Most students listened attentively and could read confidently and with understanding. They could summarise texts and could describe the characters in a

story. They could appreciate and discuss the mood, theme and style of poetry. By the end of Grade 8, most students had developed acceptable skills in creative writing. They could express their opinions and tell stories. Most secondary students expressed ideas using appropriate vocabulary, analysed texts and wrote competently on a wide range of subjects. By Grades 10 to 12, students were performing in line with curriculum and international standards.

In mathematics, the attainment and progress of students were acceptable. At the pre-primary stage children could recognise and write two-digit numbers and showed a growing appreciation of both number and shape. By Grade 2, students could recall multiplication facts and were developing an understanding of multiplication as repeated addition. At Grade 6 most students could accurately measure angles, add and subtract positive and negative numbers and convert decimals to fractions. Students in Grade 11 could find the mean and standard deviation of sets of data and calculate permutations in order to solve probability questions. Across the school, students showed an acceptable knowledge of number, shape and algebra in line with international standards. However, they did not have the capacity to work independently and to seek out their own solution to problems.

Attainment and progress in science were acceptable throughout the school. Students in pre-primary classes and Grades 1 to 4 had a very basic knowledge of science. By Grade 2 and 3, they were able to apply scientific principles to real life experiences as in the lessons on cleanliness and safety rules. By Grade 6 students had an acceptable knowledge of science facts and an understanding of elementary scientific principles. Grade 8 students were able to observe and understand the functions of different parts of a plant cell. In Grades 9 and 10, they were able to use appropriate scientific language to describe processes and classify substances on the basis of their properties. By Grade 12, students had developed observation skills in the laboratory and were able to interpret data. However, students at all levels rarely demonstrated enquiry skills as most of the lessons were based on text books. The results from internal and external tests at each grade showed that students had achieved acceptable levels of attainment.

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

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding across the school. All students demonstrated good, respectful behaviour inside and outside the classroom. A strong student council took responsibility for maintaining a high level of discipline such as monitoring and managing students during assembly, break and at dismissal time. Good student and teacher relationships were seen across the school. Students had a positive attitude towards fitness and healthy eating, a lifestyle which was promoted by the school. Most students attended school regularly and punctually.

Students' civic understanding, understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were outstanding. Older students could speak confidently about their appreciation

of Islam, the obligation to respect parents and teachers, to behave well and to read The Holy Qur'an. All students took an active approach in their roles and responsibilities. They valued the cleanliness, modernity and peacefulness of Dubai; they appreciated feeling safe in Dubai. They had a good understanding of the cultural heritage of Dubai. In assembly, students showed they understood the meaning of the national anthem.

Students' economic and environmental understanding were outstanding. Almost all students in the primary and secondary stages were well-versed in the history of Dubai and its economic progress. The 'Nature and Disaster Management' Club promoted healthy life-styles and brought awareness to students about the need to conserve water, and the recycling of paper and non-biodegradable objects such as batteries. Students participated in ecological campaigns as well as a walkathon, to develop an awareness of cancer care and prevention. Senior students linked the economy of Dubai to its oil reserves. They called it the 'City of Gold.' Primary students planted trees outside their school and actively collected used batteries and cans for recycling.

## How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching in the school was acceptable overall, but inconsistencies mentioned in the last inspection report remained. Teachers showed an appropriate level of subject knowledge, in both primary and secondary phases. Working relationships in the classroom were positive throughout and teachers were keen to impart knowledge to their students. Lessons were planned and learning objectives were beginning to be used in class. Weaker lessons lacked pace and did not provide the variety of activity needed to maintain students' active engagement in learning. These lessons were mostly dominated by teacher-talk, and often failed to meet the needs of the least and most able students. In a few more effective lessons, teachers organised group-work to encourage students to develop and share ideas. This was used to good effect in many English lessons and in outstanding Islamic Education lessons. In general however, there were too few opportunities provided for students to work collaboratively. The quality of learning resources used by teachers in classrooms was poor. Worksheets to supplement textbooks were low in standard, content and presentation.

The quality of learning was acceptable across all age ranges in the school. Students displayed a very positive attitude to learning. They behaved well in class and were keen to make progress. Most showed good listening skills and responded enthusiastically to teacher questioning. When given the opportunity, students co-operated well in groups and worked constructively with their peers. However, there was little evidence of the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to promote learning and investigational skills in all areas of the curriculum. There was also minimal development of student independence and higher order thinking as a result of tight control of student learning by teachers.

The quality of assessment was acceptable across the school. Regular questioning during lessons enabled teachers to assess the factual knowledge gained by students. However, the

type of questioning was less effective in assessing deeper understanding. Class exercise books were marked regularly, but the feedback provided to students did not help them set targets for improvement. Across all phases, students were given little opportunity to assess their own work or that of their peers. At the end of successful lessons, teachers reviewed what had been learned and the next steps in learning. The school kept detailed records of end-of-unit, and end-of-year, summative examination results. This included students' performance in key aspects of subjects. There was little evidence to show that this information was being used to inform lesson planning.

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable across the school. The school met the requirements of the CBSE curriculum leading to certification in the Indian National examinations. The curriculum focused sharply on delivery of knowledge, mainly based on text books with little use of other resources to enliven learning. While the needs of most students were met by the curriculum, it lacked breadth, with limited opportunities in art, music or dance. This was not in keeping with the holistic educational aims of the CBSE curriculum. French was an option along with, Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil and Urdu. English was the main teaching medium. The curriculum was reviewed, revised and adapted at regular intervals, but there was scope for further improvement. In both primary and secondary, there were few cross-curricular links to connect learning for students. Teachers' planning helped students to progress smoothly, from stage to stage. However, teachers did not relate many lessons to real life situations. The school had introduced a range of club activities to broaden student experiences. School assemblies provided opportunities for students to develop confidence in public speaking. They also strongly promoted multi-cultural understanding. Teachers organised visits and activities within the local community but collaboration with local businesses was limited.

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

The school's arrangements for health and safety were good. School transportation was organised efficiently and buses were supervised and maintained. The school was equipped with a good range of fire and safety equipment. Regular fire drills were carried out and recorded, and students and teachers were aware of the procedures involved. All medical incidents were recorded by the clinical staff. The school promoted a healthy lifestyle through their physical education programme. Students were supervised at all times, and teachers showed concern for their welfare. The school's child-protection policy was shared with parents, staff and students.

The quality of support was good throughout the school. Staff-student relationships were positive. Teachers monitored, recorded and tracked student's progress efficiently by regularly assessing their work. Staff provided good guidance and support where needed. They were aware of the individual needs of students. Children with additional learning needs were admitted into school and teachers monitored their progress. Attendance and punctuality were monitored effectively.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Overall, the quality of leadership and management throughout the school was acceptable. The Principal provided strong direction for the school. He had a clear moral purpose, inspired students and placed a great deal of emphasis upon achieving high standards of attainment. He was supported effectively by a Vice-Principal and two supervisors. The supervisors played an important role in the efficient running of the school. However, subject co-ordinators and heads of departments did not have a significant impact on improving the quality of work in their own areas. Likewise, teachers were not engaged in working in groups to provide continual improvement in the work of the school. A number of staff training events had been organised by the Principal to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The quality of self-evaluation was acceptable. The school had responded positively to the previous inspection. Senior managers monitored the work of the school, regularly observed classes and provided feedback to teachers. They checked teachers' lesson plans and the progress of students. However, the impact of this was limited as there was not a consistent approach or shared vision between the leadership team and the rest of the school about what constitutes good quality learning and teaching. There was a broad improvement plan which covered most aspects of its work, although this lacked focus. The curriculum had been improved with the introduction of clubs and more extra-curricular activities; additional training had been provided for staff and senior managers; and there were improvements in English. Little improvement had been made to the teaching of Arabic and science.

Partnership with parents was acceptable. The Principal was readily accessible to parents. Meetings between teachers and parents and regular reports kept parents informed on the progress of their children. These reports would be more useful if teachers made more comments and detailed what students needed to do to improve their performance. Teachers also provided information to parents by telephone. A range of links had been formed within the local community. Students had visited the local mosque and had learned about aspects of commerce by visiting a factory. Students had taken part in environmental projects and they had also supported local charities.

The school had a Board of Governors which had representatives of both parents and teachers. It received regular reports on the performance of the school. The Director of the school, who was a board member, was often in the school and was well known to staff, parents and

students. He was caring towards the students. He strongly supported the school, but as a critical friend he had yet to develop a more challenging role to hold the school to account.

The quality of the staffing facilities and resources was acceptable. The school had sufficient well-qualified teachers. A significant minority of teachers had taught in the school for less than one year. The school was clean and well maintained. The provision of specialist accommodation was basic. There were three science laboratories, one computer room, a small library, a home science room and a prayer room. There were limited ICT resources. Staff made good use of corridors with attractive displays of students' work. The premises were secure.

## Summary of inspection judgements

In their evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school, the inspection team made judgements about the following aspects of the school's performance.

Four descriptors are: Outstanding; Good; Acceptable; Unsatisfactory.

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
0% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good is the students' personal and social development?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are teaching and learning?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of support	Good	Good	Good

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
	Overall
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

How well does the school perform overall?
Acceptable

## Next steps

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. 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).

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae).

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