

INSPECTION REPORT

Repton School Dubai FZ-LLC

Report published in April 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Repton School Dubai FZ-LLC

Location	Nad Al Sheba
Type of school	Private
Website	www.reptonDubai.org
Telephone	04 4269393
Address	P.O.Box 300331, Dubai Nad Al Sheba 3 & 4.
Principal	Mr. Jonathan Hughes-D'Aeth
Curriculum	UK/IB
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / FS 1 to Year 13
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	2322
Largest nationality group of Students	UK
Number of Emirati students	221 (10%)
Date of the inspection	10th to 13th March 2014

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The context of the school

Repton School Dubai, is a private school located in Nad Al Sheba, providing education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to Post-16, aged three to 18 years. Approximately ten per cent of students were Emirati. Seventy nationalities were represented among the student population.

The school follows the National Curriculum of England from Foundation Stage to Year 11 and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma programme at Post-16. Students sat a variety of external examinations, including the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in Year 11 and the IB Diploma exams in Year 13.

At the time of the inspection there were 2, 322 students on roll. There were 204 teachers, all of whom had teaching qualifications.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- The sustained outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage;
- The high quality premises and facilities providing a stimulating and vibrant learning environment;
- The community ethos of the school reflected in the partnership with parents and the extensive use of premises;
- Students' high level of engagement, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning;
- Students' strong sense of responsibility towards their school, the wider community and their environment.

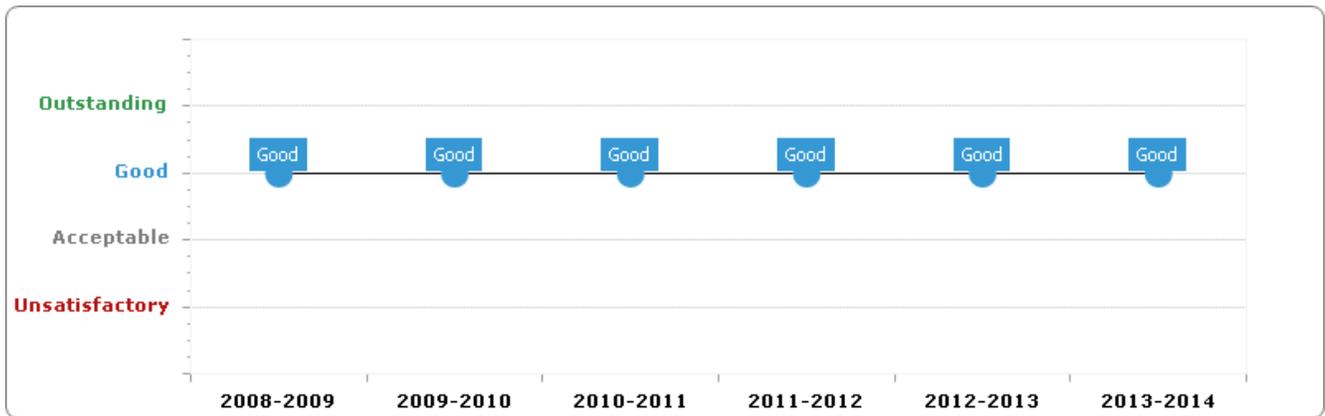
Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic by raising expectations in lessons and providing more opportunities for speaking and writing in Arabic;
- Strengthen self-evaluation processes by:
 - Using all the quantitative and qualitative data available in school;
 - Adopting a more rigorous and cohesive approach to action planning;
 - Setting key priorities with measurable success criteria.
- Further improve teaching and learning by:
 - Ensuring teachers use assessment effectively to plan lessons which meet the needs of all students;
 - Targeting professional development activities more closely to the identified needs of teachers;
 - Ensuring the best practice in developing students' enquiry skills is applied more widely.

Progress since the last inspection

- The improvement of progress to outstanding in 3 key subjects in the primary phase;
- The outstanding attitudes to learning across all phases in school;
- Students' outstanding community and environmental responsibility;
- The outstanding level of support for all children in the Foundation Stage;
- The outstanding staffing, facilities and resources in school.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Science				
Attainment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Quality of students' learning skills	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	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
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment was acceptable in Islamic Education, and Arabic. It was good in English and science from Primary to Post-16. It was outstanding in all three key subjects in Foundation Stage and mathematics in Primary and Secondary. In Islamic Education, most students had appropriate knowledge and understanding of most aspects of the subject across the three phases. However, students in Post-16 were not confident in reasoning on Islamic concepts and principles. Qur'an recitation skills were adequate but students' deeper understanding of the values of Islam was less well developed. In Arabic as a first language, students' listening and basic reading skills were secure. Students knew an appropriate range of vocabulary and grammar. However, their reading comprehension skills and their abilities to apply what they learned in writing was not as strong. In speaking, a significant proportion of students lacked confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions in standard Arabic. Students in Primary had acceptable listening and reading skills in Arabic as an additional language. In secondary, speaking skills were limited to single words and short familiar phrases for a significant proportion of students. Across all phases, independent writing was the weakest skill. Speaking skills in English were well developed in the Foundation Stage and students made an excellent start to their learning. Good reading and writing skills were systematically promoted throughout the school and students explored a range of writing styles. By Post-16, students were able to express themselves well and wrote with style and conviction. In mathematics, in the Foundation Stage, most children had an excellent understanding of money, shape and number. In the primary phase, students' numeracy skills were well above expectations. Students in the secondary phase had acquired understanding ahead of expectations in statistics, geometry, and algebra. Students in the post-16 phase had good understanding of advanced concepts. Their skills in using advanced calculators were very good. Foundation Stage children had excellent scientific understanding, predicting the likely change of state from water into ice. Primary students explained the molecular basis of this change, and secondary students explained the kinetics of reactions.

Progress was generally good or outstanding in all key subjects across all phases. Progress in Islamic Education at Post-16 and Arabic as a first language across the school was acceptable.

In Islamic Education, students in the primary and secondary phases made good progress in learning Islamic concepts. Primary students made steady progress in Qur'an recitation while their abilities to link the concepts they learned to their own everyday lives was developing slowly. In Post-16, progress in Qur'an recitation and the development of understanding of Islamic principles and laws was slow.

In Arabic as a first language, across phases, students were progressing well in building their vocabulary and their knowledge and understanding of grammar rules. However, they were making limited progress in using speaking and writing in a wide range of meaningful contexts. In Arabic as an additional language,

students made good progress in listening and in pronouncing familiar and unfamiliar words. They made steady progress in shaping Arabic script while they made less progress in learning to write independently or to express their ideas using the vocabulary they learned. Students made excellent progress in developing early literacy skills in English. Reading skills improved through the effective reading scheme. A consistent focus on writing, developing vocabulary and exploring writing styles, especially in Primary, contributed to the good progress made throughout the rest of the school in creative and factual writing. Children in the Foundation Stage and students in the primary phase made better than expected progress in applying their numeracy skills. A few more able students made less progress than expected. Students in the secondary phase progressed very well in exploration, with teacher guidance, to derive mathematical theorems for themselves. Students in the post-16 phase made good progress in advanced topics. Foundation Stage children developed excellent understanding of scientific enquiry, for example, by asking questions about construction materials. Students in other phases developed their abilities to plan fair tests and to carry out increasingly complex investigations.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of learning skills was outstanding in Foundation Stage and good across all other phases. Students enjoyed their learning. They were engaged, on task and eager to respond. Students were aware of their targets for improvement but this was sometimes a theoretical understanding rather than a thorough knowledge of their own strengths, weaknesses and next steps of learning. Interactions in the classroom were productive and supportive. Students in all phases made meaningful connections between past and present learning and to applications in the real world. They could talk confidently about their learning. Many collaborated successfully in purposeful group work. However, the development of this learning skill depended on the extent and quality of opportunities given during lessons. Most lessons gave students some opportunity to show their reflective and critical thinking, although these skills were not consistently well-developed by all students. In secondary science, students used a range of ICT devices very successfully but the use of ICT by students in lessons to enhance learning was generally underdeveloped.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Personal responsibility was outstanding in all phases. Students across all phases had a positive sense of responsibility and thrived on critical feedback. They demonstrated outstanding behaviour within and outside classrooms where they appeared mature, self-disciplined and responsive to instructions. Students exhibited good relationships with their peers and the staff, and were fully aware of the school's expectations. Most had a good understanding of the importance of healthy living, and took an active part in the school's fitness programmes. The overall attendance rate was good.

Students' cultural and global awareness was outstanding in Foundation Stage and good in other phases. Lessons provided a good emphasis on helping students to explore aspects of the culture and history of Dubai and the UAE. Additionally, visits out of school and important events such as the celebration of National Day occurred. Through lessons, students gained an appreciation of many aspects of other cultures. Students appreciated and respected the values of the Islam and the majority showed clear understanding of the role of Islamic values in Dubai and its influence on the local culture.

Students' community and environmental responsibilities were outstanding. Students undertook important roles to help the school run smoothly and represented the views of their fellow students maturely. The work of the Eco Council was greatly respected and students were involved in a range of important initiatives such as the vegetable garden and in support of environmental issues in Dubai. Students supported many charities and showed concern for people in difficult circumstances locally and abroad.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in other phases. It was strongest in mathematics, particularly in the foundation and primary phases, and weaker in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects and how to teach them was good overall. It was excellent in the Foundation Stage because of teachers' expert understanding of the learning needs of young students. Lesson planning was well-structured. In the best lessons, it was imaginative and highly motivational. Resources were used effectively although there were few opportunities for students themselves to use ICT as a learning resource. Teachers' interactions with students were a strong and supportive feature of most lessons. Consequently, students were usually active participants in meaningful learning. Teachers had good expectations of students, although their effectiveness in providing sufficient challenge for all groups and individuals was more varied, and was an area of weakness in Arabic lessons.

The development of enquiry and critical thinking skills was intrinsic to all aspects of the Foundation Stage and these skills were also well developed through investigational activities in science. However, this aspect of teaching was not fully established in all lessons.

Assessment was outstanding in Foundation Stage and good across other phases, as combined pastoral and academic tracking helped to address obstacles to students' learning. Primary and secondary school teachers used internationally benchmarked data and based target setting on external tests. Many teachers expertly assessed students' strengths and weaknesses during lessons, and some were skilful in adapting lessons accordingly. Most subject leaders were secure in their interpretation of data and addressed students' needs through curriculum modification or lesson plans. There was inconsistency in teachers' feedback to guide learning. Often in the secondary school this focused on level descriptors, meeting exam requirements and imposing targets, rather than on ensuring student ownership and addressing the specific learning needs of students. Increasingly, students were provided with assessment rubrics for their work. Self- and peer-reflection were features of the best lessons.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in the other phases. Time allocated to the core subjects was appropriate in all phases. Rigorous self-evaluation processes were in place to meet the needs of the diverse and changing profile of the student population. The curriculum was broad and balanced with appropriate options in the secondary phase. The Foundation Stage curriculum was based on a clear understanding of the development needs of young children. Older students were well-prepared for transition to other phases and post school education. Continuity and progression across other phases had improved. Opportunities for critical thinking, independent learning, research and the use of ICT were well-established in the Foundation Stage and secondary phase but were insufficiently developed in primary classes. Links across subjects were not systematically and deliberately planned to enable students to apply their skills in meaningful contexts. Almost all students participated in the broad range of extra-curricular activities.

The curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good in the other phases. Provision in the Foundation Stage allowed children appropriate choice and enabled them to learn at their own paces and in line with their stages of development. In the other phases, the curriculum was effectively planned to provide stimulating learning opportunities for most students in the majority of subjects. Although it was usually adapted to reflect their different needs and

learning styles, this was inconsistent. The wide range of options for older students both in and out of the classroom ensured they were well-prepared for the future.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Provision for students' health and safety was outstanding across the school. Buildings were cleaned and maintained to a high standard with exemplary record keeping. Friendly and efficient security staff ensured students' safety on site and also organised safe pick up and drop off arrangements by parents and school buses. The fleet was well maintained and there was good monitoring of students' safety. The clinic staff maintained comprehensive and secure records, safe storage of medication and provided a high standard of care. They proactively promoted healthy eating and life style. Students in the primary school respected the 'no hat no play' policy. Staff were regularly trained in and understood the schools child protection policy.

The quality of support was outstanding for children at the Foundation Stage and good for students in other phases. Staff-student relationships were very positive throughout the school. Behaviour was positive in all phases. The warm and caring relationships helped to create a productive learning environment. Assistants in the Foundation Stage nurtured the growth and development of children positively. Accurate records of students' attendance and punctuality were kept. Staff helped all parents to ensure that student attendance was as high as possible. Staff placed great importance on promoting and supporting the wellbeing and personal development of all students. Students in the senior school benefited from a formal programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education. Information and advice on higher education on leaving Post-16 was a strength of the school.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership of the school was good. Most leaders promoted a shared vision of excellence. Responsibilities were strategically shared at different levels. There was a positive working ethos, a drive to succeed and communication was good. Most leaders had at least a good capacity for continued school improvement. However, the senior leaders did not always set clear expected outcomes against their strategies for improvements, hindering the improvement process.

Self-evaluation was good. Processes were in place and presented an accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school knew itself well but priorities for improvement did not systematically contain detailed, focused and achievable goals. The evaluation of teaching and learning was accurate but the appraisal system did not always inform professional development. Staff would benefit from additional opportunities to share their practice. Nevertheless, the school had successfully addressed a few recommendations from the previous inspection.

The links with parents and the community were outstanding. New initiatives such as artists of the month, and the World Cup weeks had been popular with all stakeholders. The presence of parents was evident in school during the inspection week. They played an active part in the education of their children and their interventions improved both personal and academic outcomes. Communication was an improving feature. Parents praised the school for the prompt responses to concerns and the quality of the reporting system in place. Links with the wider community were also robust. They included purposeful links with the sister schools in the UK and several businesses internationally.

Governance was good. There was a positive and professional relationship between the Governing Board and the school. The school was well supported and was clearly held to account through the Education sub-committee. The governors had high expectations for the school and aimed to provide unique learning opportunities to students. This was particularly reflected in the quality of resources and facilities. However, high staff turnover was an issue for the board as was their need to capitalise on the teachers' strengths through effective professional development.

The management of resources was outstanding. Schools procedures and routines were highly effective. All teachers held appropriate qualifications and were deployed effectively. Schools facilities were expanding and enabled students to grow in a high-quality learning environment. Many specialist facilities were available. This was particularly the case in physical education and science. Resources for learning, as observed in lessons, were varied and of excellent quality. Contemporary technology was being strengthened and the new libraries were becoming hubs for interaction, independent learning and research. There was an insufficient number of books on offer in Arabic.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

The school had good systems for identifying individual potential and for setting targets for Emirati students. In the primary and lower secondary, Emirati students were less likely than their peers to attain in

line with or to exceed personal targets and were more likely to be placed in lower sets. They were well integrated into all classes in which they were taught and were fully involved in all activities. Emirati children made outstanding progress in mathematics in the Foundation Stage and good progress in other phases. Progress in English and science was good in all phases. In Islamic Education it was good in primary and acceptable in Secondary and Post- 16.

Progress in Arabic was acceptable in Primary and Secondary with listening and reading being better than writing and speaking. Emirati students who sat IGCSE showed good attainment across Arabic, English, mathematics and science. This good level of attainment resulted because students saw the relevance of the work to their lives and responded well to the high expectations of school and its teachers.

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

The school had identified over one hundred students who had various levels of special educational need. In addition, some students who were gifted in particular subject areas, or talented in aspects such as sport or the arts, had been identified too. Specialist staff were working to increase the involvement of parents of students with special educational needs. They drew up helpful individualised programmes for the students most in need, and explained those to teachers. Most teachers implemented the advice in the programmes well. Some students benefited from speech or occupational therapy, or from tutorial work when they were withdrawn occasionally from classes. As a result of these approaches, students with special educational needs made good progress. Monitoring of the progress of students with special educational needs was improving.

How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

In Arabic as a first language, almost all teachers had good subject knowledge. Most teachers gave sufficient opportunities for students to work in groups or independently and to learn at a reasonable pace within a positive learning climate. Teachers often planned for their lessons and communicated the learning objectives clearly to students. However, expectations were sometimes low and did not help students to apply their language skills in meaningful, real-life contexts. Teachers made adequate use of additional resources beyond the textbooks such as ICT, storybooks and handouts. In Primary, most teachers used teaching strategies appropriate to the age and stage of the students. In Secondary, teaching was mostly driven by the content of the textbooks rather than addressing their linguistic needs. Most teachers used

frequent questioning to check understanding. However, in too many cases, the questions were often strictly limited to the textbook content and did not help students learn to use the language beyond the classroom context. Some teachers provided differentiated work with the aim of addressing the different needs of specific groups of students but the frequency and the quality of this varied widely across the school.

The school's curriculum was based on the Ministry of Education standards. Many lessons, particularly in the primary phase, were supported by additional teacher-made resources. However, these did not systematically cater for the broad range of linguistic needs of students. Similarly, in Secondary, the curriculum lacked flexibility and was not sufficiently modified to meet the need of all students, particularly those with underdeveloped speaking, reading or writing 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	242	17%
	Last year	319	25%
Teachers	97		45%
Students	22		12%

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

Only about a sixth of the parents responded to their survey, a drop from the previous year. A minority of teachers, and only a few students, responded to their surveys. Most parents were satisfied with the overall quality of education and leadership. They had positive views about the curriculum and their children's progress in English, mathematics and science, but were less positive about Islamic Education and Arabic. Only a quarter of those who responded felt that fee increases had led to improvements in the quality of facilities or teaching. Most parents and students felt that teacher feedback to students on their work was helpful. Less than half of the students who responded thought that they had opportunities for leadership, and that senior leaders in the school listened to their views. A significant minority of students had concerns about the range of extra-curricular activities and how the school dealt with bullying. Most teachers felt that they participated in meaningful review of the curriculum. A majority felt that the school was well led, leaders listened, and they were supported to help students with a special educational need. Just under half of those who responded had positive views about their opportunities for professional development.

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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