

INSPECTION REPORT

Towheed Iranian School For Boys

Report published in April 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Towheed Iranian School For Boys

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Location | Al Quoz 1 |
| Type of school | Private |
| Website | www.bi-st.com |
| Telephone | 04-3389953 |
| Address | PO Box 33917, Al Meydan Road, Dubai |
| Principal | Amir Hossein Rezaei |
| Curriculum | Iranian |
| Gender of students | Boys and Girls |
| Age / Grades or Year Groups | 3 to 18 years /Kindergarten to Grade 12 |
| Attendance | Outstanding |
| Number of students on roll | 840 |
| Largest nationality group of Students | Iranian |
| Number of Emirati students | 0 |
| Date of the inspection | 5th to 8th November 2012 |

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The context of the school

The Towheed Iranian School for Boys served a community of students mostly from Iran. The school had a Kindergarten (KG) with English as the language of instruction and two sections; one following the Iranian curriculum and another international section. The Iranian section followed the Iranian National Curriculum from Grades 1 to 12 with Farsi as the language of instruction. The International section offered a US curriculum in English for Grades 1 to 8. The International section provided education for boys and girls. From Grade 4, boys and girls studied in separate classes.

There were 840 students on roll in total. One hundred and twenty students had been identified as having special educational needs. Staff support for them included a school counsellor and medical team. At the time of the inspection, 16 of the 67 teachers were new to the school. Almost all teachers held a first degree and a recognised teaching qualification.

At the time of the inspection, the Principal had been in post for three months.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Outstanding attendance;
- Good student and staff relationships;
- Students' strong work ethic;
- Good links with parents and the local community;
- Good governance that held school leaders to account for the school's performance.

Recommendations

- Raise students' attainment in Arabic and English in all phases of the school;
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Kindergarten and primary phases of the school;
- Use assessment information more effectively to identify the next steps in learning for individuals and groups of students;
- Ensure that the curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic meets the UAE Ministry of Education requirements;
- Improve the accuracy of school self-evaluation by all leaders.

Progress since the last inspection

- Students' progress in Arabic as an additional language had improved to acceptable in the primary phase;
- Students now achieved good levels of attainment and made good progress in mathematics and science in the primary, middle and high school phases;
- Improved teaching and learning in the middle and high school phases;
- The board of governors had become more effectively involved in the school's development;
- The facilities and resources for learning had improved.

Trend of overall performance



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

| | KG | Primary | Middle | High |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Islamic Education | | | | |
| Attainment | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Progress | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Arabic as a first language | | | | |
| Attainment | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Progress | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Arabic as an additional language | | | | |
| Attainment | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Farsi Language | | | | |
| Attainment | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Progress | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| English | | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Good | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Mathematics | | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Good | Good | Good |
| Progress | Acceptable | Good | Good | Good |
| Science | | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Good | Good | Good |
| Progress | Acceptable | Good | Good | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

| | KG | Primary | Middle | High |
|--|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Attitudes and behaviour | Good | Outstanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness | Good | Good | Good | Good |
| Community and environmental responsibility | Good | Good | Good | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

| | KG | Primary | Middle | High |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Good | Good |
| Quality of students' learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Good | Good |
| Assessment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

| | KG | Primary | Middle | High |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum quality | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

| | KG | Primary | Middle | High |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Health and Safety | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Quality of Support | Good | Good | Good | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

| | Whole school |
|--|--------------|
| Quality of leadership | Acceptable |
| Self-evaluation and improvement planning | Acceptable |
| Partnerships with parents and the community | Good |
| Governance | Good |
| Management, including staffing, facilities and resources | Good |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment in the key subjects was mixed. In general, students demonstrated better knowledge and skills in mathematics and science than in English and Arabic. In Arabic, attainment was acceptable in all phases. In the international section, students had good speaking and listening skills in the international section, particularly when students performed plays and songs. Most students reached acceptable standards in English across the school. Their listening, speaking and reading skills were better than their writing skills. English grammar across the school was good and students' speaking and listening skills were a strength of the high school. Attainment in mathematics was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good elsewhere. A few students didn't apply their understanding in solving problems and this limited their use of investigation and enquiry skills. In science, a majority of the children in Kindergarten had appropriate knowledge of how humans sense the world around them. In the primary, middle and high school phases a majority of students showed particularly good knowledge and understanding about a range of topics including nutrients, animal food chains, and galaxies. High school students demonstrated skill with equations and investigating cells using microscopes.

Progress was broadly acceptable in Arabic and English, but mostly good in mathematics and science. A weakness in writing limited students' progress in Arabic as an additional language, which was acceptable. Most children made good progress in listening to and understanding English in the Kindergarten. Progress in the rest of the school was acceptable overall. It was good in speaking and reading, when learning the meaning of new vocabulary with the aid of dictionaries. Progress was better in writing when students worked with a partner. In mathematics, Kindergarten children made acceptable progress learning about shapes and how to sort items by different attributes. Most students made good progress through the rest of the key subjects. For example, when they learned computational skills and correct mathematical vocabulary. In the primary, middle and high school phases a majority of science students made better than expected progress as a result of more challenging work.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good in the Kindergarten and outstanding across the rest of the school. Students had a strong work ethic and displayed a love of learning. They were self-disciplined and enjoyed taking responsibilities in the school. Relationships between students were friendly and they were respectful of their teachers. They had very good understanding of healthy living. Attendance was outstanding and punctuality was generally good. The student council played an active role in school

improvement and supervision at break times and during dismissal. A successful healthy living programme had resulted in students being well aware of the importance of healthy eating and exercise; most played sports regularly.

Students showed respect for Islam and Muslim students recognised the underlying importance of their religion in guiding their everyday lives. In discussions, primary students talked confidently about the UAE's national culture and local traditions. Senior students showed mature understanding of global issues and how this related to the development of the UAE. Most students understood the importance of protecting the environment at the local level and more broadly. Older students understood the concept of environmental sustainability and the value of involvement in the community. However, opportunities to lead projects were limited for most students.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was of acceptable quality in the Kindergarten and primary phases, but good in the middle and high school. Almost all teachers had well-developed knowledge of their subjects. Lesson plans and use of resources were of acceptable quality overall, but plans did not always set out clearly what students had to learn. When this was the case, it affected the accuracy of assessment and how well teachers planned to meet the learning needs of different groups. A few teachers made use of information and communication technology to show helpful slides and videos. In the best lessons, teachers questioned students to promote dialogue and critical thinking. This skill was of high quality in mathematics and science lessons, but more variable in other subjects. Activities in the Kindergarten were too teacher-directed and did not give children enough opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them.

Learning was of acceptable quality in the Kindergarten and primary phases, but good in the middle and high school phases. Students were enthusiastic learners. Students engaged in activities when the teaching was lively, challenging and interactive, and when they had opportunities to collaborate on meaningful investigations. Such learning was more often seen amongst older students. Overall, students had insufficient opportunities to explore and investigate using information and communications technology. Students had too limited opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. Students applied their knowledge in real-life contexts in most subjects. Opportunities to undertake research, solve problems or develop critical thinking skills were not provided consistently across subjects and phases.

The assessment of learning was acceptable at all phases. Teachers in the Kindergarten kept general records of the progress of individual children. In all key subjects in the other phases, the main approach

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was to have mid-term and end-term tests. Teachers also carried out less formal assessment during 'question and answer' sessions and when they were helping individual students.

Through these approaches, teachers had broad knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of individual students in their classes. However, assessment was not always matched well to learning objectives. The use of assessment data to improve curriculum, teaching or support for students was weak overall.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable throughout the school. Since the last inspection, staff had worked to improve Islamic Education and Arabic, for example by introducing more Ministry of Education (MoE) resources. However, the curriculum content in Islamic Education was still not compliant as required by the UAE Ministry of Education. Requirements for the minimum time to be spent on Arabic were not fully met in the primary phase of the Iranian section. The curriculum was planned to meet the needs of the majority of students. Nevertheless, too little use was made of a large indoor space in the Kindergarten to enable students to develop their physical skills, be creative, and apply early mathematics and writing skills. The provision for students with special educational needs was at an early stage of development. The curriculum provided good levels of challenge in several year groups. High school boys, in particular, were enthusiastic about mathematics. The worksheets given to younger students, however, did not always inspire them or enable them to think creatively. In some grades there were good opportunities for independent research and critical thinking. These were inconsistent across the school and were seldom integrated with lessons.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The provision made for the health and safety of students was of acceptable quality. Transport arrangements to and from school were acceptable and the school was a safe environment in which to learn. Safety about the school had improved by the installation of soft flooring in the play area and by moving students from the second to the first floor. There was good medical care in the clinic with formal links with the Iranian hospital. The school nurse was involved in the day-to-day life of the school, attending assemblies and promoting healthy life styles. The school building was suitable for students with physical disabilities. Teachers were aware of child protection procedures. There were no regular drills to ensure that new teachers and students were fully aware of the procedures for evacuation.

The quality of support for students was good. The small class sizes ensured that teachers knew their students well. Individual support was given to students in most lessons. Teachers had good rapport with their students, who were respectful and confident in putting forward ideas, answering and asking questions. The school monitored attendance and managed punctuality well. Prompt action was taken when a child was absent. Class teachers monitored student's personal development well and useful career advice was given by the school counsellor.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school had introduced appropriate procedures for identifying students with special educational needs. These involved formal testing or referrals by teachers, parents or the school doctor. The special educational needs co-ordinator had been recently appointed. Individual education plans were not in place, but teachers were advised as to how they could provide for students' individual needs. The monitoring and tracking of the progress of these students was at an early stage of development. The school had successfully built trust with parents who had children with special needs so that additional support could be given. The curriculum was not consistently adapted for the students with special educational needs.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership of the school was of acceptable quality. There was a strong commitment to school improvement by the newly appointed Principal and senior leaders, based on shared values, a realistic vision and an understanding of what needed to improve. Leadership was effectively delegated and organised across all subjects and phases. Senior leaders were flexible and had the students' interests at the forefront of their plans. A lack of rigor in the monitoring of teaching and learning in the Kindergarten meant that young children had limited experiences to develop independence and make choices about their learning. Limited access to learning through play in the large indoor and outdoor areas restricted children's opportunities to explore and investigate. Leaders demonstrated a capacity to develop the school further.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Regular self-evaluation meant that senior leaders were aware of the school's strengths and some weaknesses, such as the quality of

Arabic teaching. The school had made progress addressing some, but not all, of the recommendations from last year's report.

The evaluation of teaching was systematic and well-focused, although it was not sufficiently linked to the learning outcomes for students. Development plans identified a range of priorities; however, they required more detail and measurable outcomes.

Links with parents and the local community were good. Parents were involved in the school through the Advisory Council. The parents' association supported the school in a variety of ways that included fund-raising and the sharing of their expertise in many areas of life. Parents appreciated the approachability of the teaching staff. The oral and written reports about their children's progress were helpful but lacked detail. Good community links included those established with the Iranian hospital and Knowledge Village. There were strong links with the family of other Iranian schools but few with other schools in Dubai.

The board of governors provided good direction for the school and ensured most decisions were referenced to the needs of students. They were active and effective in holding the school to account for improvements. They routinely sought the views of students, parents and teachers and responded well to any concerns. The council had improved its representation with nine parents and business members and was eager to further improve partnerships with both the local and the wider Dubai community.

The day-to-day management of the school was good. Teachers were suitably qualified. The building was sizeable with a good range of facilities that included large outdoor playing areas, extensive sports areas, various specialist rooms, a 500-seat auditorium and a spacious library with an adequate range of books. The Kindergarten indoor and outdoor learning areas were limited, as was information and communications technology access in classes. The library was not used frequently enough to be a regular resource for research.

[View judgements](#)

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 judgments. 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 | 132 | 22% |
| | Last year | 160 | 27% |
| Teachers | 33 | | 38% |
| Students | 96 | | 14% |

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

Less than a quarter of parents responded to the survey. Most agreed that their children were making good progress, particularly in the international section in mathematics and science. They felt that progress was less good in Arabic as an additional language. Most thought that their children enjoyed school and were safe there, and that students' behaviour was good. Almost all parents indicated that the school was well led but a few thought that their opinions were ignored by leaders. Most parents agreed that their children were getting the education they expected from the school. A significant minority had concerns about the range of subjects and after-school activities offered. A few parents wanted their children to be more actively involved in community projects in Dubai. Just over one-third of teachers responded to their survey. Their main concern was the lack of resources to do their jobs well. Only a few senior students completed the survey. Their responses to the survey were mostly positive. Almost all agreed that they were satisfied with the quality of education they received. A few students expressed concern not being involved in decision making to improve their school and that they were not listened to. Students reported that overall the school had improved since last year.

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.

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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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