

# The Indian High School Inspection Report

Grades 5 to 12

Report issued February 2010

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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.

The Indian High School was inspected in January 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 its 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 Oud Metha, The Indian High School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Grade 5 to Grade 12, aged 11 to 18 years. The school followed a Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 5,087 students on roll. The student attendance rate reported by the school for the last academic session was of an acceptable level.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. The majority were very positive about the provision for their children and strongly supported the school. They were particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, the way their children enjoyed school and that they were treated fairly. They praised the school's welfare arrangements and the care the staff took of their children. Parents felt welcome in the school, valued the good relationships it fostered and appreciated the quality of its leadership and management. They felt that the school enjoyed a good reputation both locally and further afield. There were few concerns expressed.

### How well does the school perform overall?

The Indian High School was a good, well-led school with several outstanding features and a strong capacity to improve further. Students attained good standards and made good progress in English, mathematics and science. Further work was necessary to improve the students' standards and the quality of the teaching in Arabic. Their awareness of and respect for Islam were well developed and they applied their learning in practical ways. The students' behaviour was outstanding and their rate of attendance was acceptable. They enjoyed very good opportunities to take responsibility as class

monitors, green-team members and as representatives on the prefectorial board. They displayed excellent initiative in speaking and performing before their peers. Students had a good knowledge of the diversity of Dubai and its economy. Their civic understanding was outstanding and so was their awareness of environmental issues.

The teaching was good overall, with the vast majority of lessons judged as of acceptable or better quality. Teaching was strongest in English, mathematics and science, but good teaching was also observed in a broad range of other subjects. Students were enthusiastic about learning and fully engaged in all classes. Procedures for assessing students' work were acceptable and teachers were beginning to use the analysis of results to improve their teaching. The curriculum was good, with particular strengths in its extra-curricular provision. Teachers closely followed the CBSE programme in the upper grades, occasionally adapting it well to motivate students more. They knew their students well and communications and reports to parents were regular and informative. The school's arrangements for students' health and safety were outstanding, as was the quality of protection and support.

The quality of leadership and management was outstanding: it was caring, consultative, well organised and determined to improve the school further. Self-evaluation procedures were good, taking full account of the range of opinions from teachers, parents and students. The quality of governance was outstanding. The school enjoyed excellent links with other organisations, both locally and abroad. The buildings, resources and facilities were outstanding: they were safe, secure, and well maintained.

## Key features of the school

- The outstanding and innovative leadership at many levels, including that of the governors, which successfully promoted and maintained a powerful school ethos of community, aspiration, philanthropy and high achievement;
- The outstanding behaviour, attitude and maturity of the students of all ages, which led to a harmonious and productive learning community;
- Teachers' expert knowledge of CBSE requirements, which resulted in high achievement and successful entry to major world-ranking universities;
- The overall quality of teaching, which, although often good, sometimes required too little involvement by students in lessons;
- The wide range of extra-curricular activities;
- The outstanding level of care provided and the very well informed careers guidance;
- The need for improvement in students' attainment in Arabic;
- The need for assessment in lessons to be more regular, detailed and helpful in enabling students to improve their work.

## Recommendations

- Improve attainment in Arabic, particularly in speaking, and especially among the boys;
- Broaden the range of teaching strategies so that students have more opportunities to work in pairs and in groups and to conduct their own enquiries and research inside and outside the classroom;
- Improve daily assessment so that teachers can use it more consistently to plan lessons with activities that match the learning needs of all students.

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

Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable in all grades and the students made good progress in the subject. The majority of students could memorise verses and short chapters of The Holy Qur'an and also the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). The Holy Qur'an recitation skills of students were good. In the lower grades, most students knew basic details about the Prophet's life (PBUH) in Mecca and Medina. They understood the value of work in Islam, and they could mention the work of other prophets. Older students could discuss some of Islamic tenets and understood the importance of working to improve the quality of their belief. They recognised the significance of important months of the Islamic calendar.

Attainment in Arabic was acceptable in all grades. The students made good progress studying Arabic as a foreign language. In the lower grades most students read and wrote words, sentences and short paragraphs, only making few errors. They linked words correctly in sentences and recognised unfamiliar as well as known words. Most understood grammatical rules and were able to identify different parts of speech. Older students read paragraphs making few errors. Students could re-arrange sentences in a story correctly. However, the students' speaking skills were under-developed.

Attainment and progress in English were good. By the end of Grade 12, students' attainment was at least in line with CBSE expectations. Students became very competent English language users by the end of their secondary education. The highest levels of attainment in all grades were in speaking. Students were generally highly articulate, using a good range of vocabulary in complex sentences. Listening skills and reading attainments were good in all grades. The students' good standard of writing in English was often demonstrated in other subjects, such as marketing and science. The students' progress in literary analysis and writing in Grades 9 and 11 was particularly strong.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were good. In Grades 5 to 8, the students' knowledge and skill in handling decimal numbers, mathematical operations and measurement was at least in line with age-related expectations. Students showed good skills in problem solving with well-developed practical skills. However, their investigative skills were relatively underdeveloped. Younger students progressed well in their understanding of the measurement of circles, squares and rectangles. They worked confidently with fractions but had less certain knowledge of multiplication tables. By Grade

12, students used various formulae competently and handled complex calculations well, but their ability to apply learning to real life or unfamiliar situations was unsure. Older students had a good understanding of data handling and analysis, using advanced statistical techniques. A few were insecure in thinking logically and analytically.

Attainment and progress in science were good. In Grade 8 most students demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding above age-related expectations. Older students achieved still higher standards. Grade 8 students recalled information, answered questions and labelled diagrams using Latin names like lactobacillus and penicillin. In Grades 9 and 11 students conducted experiments independently on, for example, Archimedes' principle, the rate of water-cooling on polished and unpolished surfaces and the reflection of sound. They had good skills when recording observations. They used data accurately, interpreting and showing results using scientific symbols and units. They were less assured in their critical thinking and their use of investigative skills. Trends in attainment over time showed that standards had been maintained and students made consistent progress from year-to-year.

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

The students' behaviour was outstanding. They moved around the school in a disciplined manner and were punctual for lessons and other activities. Their positive attitudes towards learning were outstanding. Senior students demonstrated high levels of self-esteem, confidence and aspiration. They confirmed that the school helped them to reach their fullest potential and they enjoyed their education enormously. Relationships between students and with teachers were based on mutual trust and respect. Overall attendance in the last year was acceptable. However, the attendance rate of older students was a little lower than that of the younger ones.

Students eagerly accepted their duties as responsible members of their community. The enhanced school curriculum required significant involvement by all students in community work. They had a good understanding of Islam and its teachings and participated in the region's traditional culture with enthusiasm. Students clearly valued Dubai's multicultural nature and felt privileged to enjoy the opportunities it offered for personal growth.

Students were keenly aware of the economic progress made by Dubai and its potential to become a leader in the region. However, older students were not sufficiently aware of the inter-relationships between different parts of the global economy and their possible impact on the economy of Dubai. Students displayed deep commitment to environmental causes. Their awareness of issues such as global warming and deforestation was outstanding. They participated actively in campaigns and projects to sustain the environment. Students patrolled the campus in green teams to keep it tidy. They also were conscientious in recycling paper and conserving water and electricity.

## How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good and a few lessons were outstanding. However, there was some variation between grades: the most effective teaching took place in the upper school. All teachers

had good subject knowledge. They used it to ensure that lesson content was well planned and that the learning needs of the majority were met. Teachers used time well and deployed textbooks and other resources effectively to help the students to learn. Teachers engaged the students' interest through question and answer strategies and gave them opportunities to develop critical thinking skills. However, at times, teachers dominated the lessons, directing the learning and talking to students for long periods. Consequently, opportunities for extended discussion, reflection, collaborative and independent learning were reduced.

Students liked and respected their teachers. They were often fully engaged, listened well and were enthusiastic about their learning. Their oral skills were very good and they spoke fluently about what they knew and understood. They had a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the world at large and related their studies to global issues and values.

Assessment procedures and practices were acceptable. The students' progress was assessed very regularly in tests, worksheets and projects. The school's record keeping was accessible to parents and other stakeholders online, which was exemplary practice. However, in a few lessons, students received too little feedback on the quality of their work. Marking often consisted of ticks with too few suggestions for how the work could be improved. Students were involved to only a very limited extent in assessing how well they had understood what they had been taught.

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

The quality of the curriculum was good, with a very wide range of extra-curricular enhancements offered. The curriculum in Grades 5 to 8 was broad and well planned. It included valuable initiatives such as the Skills Based Attainment in Independent Learning programme, which was a thoroughly useful model to encourage students to adopt different roles when learning in groups. Also of much value was the Resource Based Learning programme to give enhanced opportunities for the more able students. The curriculum was being strongly supplemented by a vigorous and well resourced emphasis upon e-learning. The curriculum for Grades 9 to 12 was based mainly on CBSE courses. It not only showed good breadth and balance, but also allowed students a wide choice from up to 20 optional subjects. These included many advanced academic options and also creative and practical subjects, such as fashion studies. The curriculum was sequenced well to build on students' previous experience and prepare them for the next stages of their education. The curriculum in all subjects was reviewed and amended when necessary annually and at the end of each semester. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and the optional lessons after school catered well for individual students. Plentiful opportunities were provided for students to benefit from links with the broader community locally, regionally and internationally. Students had excellent opportunities for physical education, not only at school but also in a nearby sports and leisure club. This resulted in their competing very successfully in a range of sports at regional and international levels. Regular educational visits to Europe, North America, India and the Far East made a significant contribution to students' learning and their aspirations for the future. The very popular 'Weekend Munch' initiative promoted excellent cross-curricular links between subjects such as food technology, art, drama,

marketing, mathematics and economics. The curriculum reflected the school's strong belief in the values of philanthropy and compassion.

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

The quality of the school's health and safety arrangements was outstanding. Transport arrangements ensured safety during travel to school. Staff understood their roles and responsibilities to ensure health and safety. The premises, equipment and resources were excellent, well maintained and appropriate to meet the educational needs of the students. Regular health checks were carried out and records maintained. Fire drills and safety measures were in place. Healthy lifestyles were promoted very well through the provision of healthy food options in the canteen and the high value placed on physical fitness. Good child protection arrangements were in place and staff, students and parents were well informed.

The quality of support and guidance was also outstanding. Staff-student relationships were excellent. Teachers knew their students well and were sensitive to their needs. Students with emotional, academic or other difficulties were identified and referred to the Counselling Centre, which provided outstanding confidential support on a range of important matters from emotional well-being to choices regarding their future education and career. Careers guidance was extremely well informed and a great many students went on from Grade 12 to higher education, often at world-ranking universities in India, America and Europe. The school's approach to managing behaviour was well defined, understood and shared by students, staff and senior managers. The school had recently introduced a tracking system to monitor students' academic progress using an electronic database. The teachers regularly monitored students' progress in their written, oral and practical work. The school maintained an accurate record of students' attendance and punctuality and the vigilance office maintained a record of late comers.

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

The quality of leadership and management was outstanding. The Chief Executive Officer and his four Principals provided thoughtful, inclusive, caring, single-minded and very well organised leadership, with good support from the supervisors and administrative staff. The Chief Executive Officer's leadership was educationally innovative, highly committed and hardworking, empowering all students to realise their fullest potential. Senior managers showed a very clear vision for the future and strength of purpose in achieving their aims. They were supported strongly by teachers, students and parents and held in high respect. This enhanced the school's capacity to implement its strategic plans for improvement. Aspects of leadership were distributed proportionately among the staff, with emphasis given to the development of middle and senior managers. Subject departments and pastoral leaders held meetings each semester, often weekly, and these helped to inform planning. Teachers and students understood and keenly supported the school's core purposes and values. The school fulfilled its mission statement to produce globally pro-active citizens. It also enabled its students to embody the sentiment contained in its motto that 'Knowledge is Power'. Its underlying ethos as a charitable and philanthropic organisation strongly promoted the virtue of compassion in a



wide range of ways, such as the Chairman's Fund for needy students as well as by donations to Indian charities.

Systematic processes, both internal and external, helped to obtain a sharply accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Many staff contributed to self-evaluation and improvement planning was thorough. It focused on improving staff and students' personal development, aiming for academic excellence and maintaining the trust of the community. It also focused on developing outstanding links with local, regional and international organisations. The school valued the students' opinions, gathered through well-regulated student councils and in many other ways. Planning for improvement was outstanding and this had underpinned the school's development to a position where it was very well placed for further expansion.

Good links had been forged with parents and contributed to the students' high aspirations and achievements. Communications to parents, students and external organisations were outstanding. The school reported to parents regularly about students' academic and social progress. Parents felt they were welcome at the school and were consulted regularly. They also benefited from seminars and presentations from visiting speakers hosted by the Counselling Centre and covering a range of topics such as 'Bully-proofing our school' and 'Enhanced parenting skills'. Members of the parents' body played an effective role in ensuring that their views were taken fully on board. Many parents expressed strong faith in the school's leadership to continue improvements.

The school had a very conscientious, well established and experienced governing body with full responsibility for its strategic direction, providing an impartial, objective and supportive voice. Governors had appointed 15 honorary consultants, each an expert in their field, who provided excellent strategic guidance and executive decision-making in areas such as information and communication technology and e-learning. The management team of governors and the Chief Executive Officer met often to monitor the school's development and manage events throughout the academic year.

Although class sizes were often large, the deployment of staff was appropriate to the needs of students. Staff were suitably qualified and experienced. Collectively they were very committed to their work. Good use was made of teachers' subject specialisms. A cycle of continuous professional development had been established, with many opportunities to attend courses. Whole school training featured prominently to better inform staff about the most relevant developments. The internal accommodation and outside facilities were spacious and well maintained. They contributed to the quality of students' learning and attainment, as did the good level of resourcing and access to specialist equipment and subject-based clubrooms. The outdoor environment was well used as a resource for learning as well as for many sports and recreational activities. Students spoke of the very impressive sports accommodation and inspection evidence supported this view.

## 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.

The four descriptors are: Outstanding; Good; Acceptable; Unsatisfactory.

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good

How good is the students' personal and social development?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are teaching and learning?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Curriculum quality	Good	Good

How well does the school protect and support students?		
Age group:	Grades 5 – 8	Grades 9 – 12
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Good

## 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.

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

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