

INSPECTION REPORT

Al Adab Iranian Private School for Boys and Girls

Report published in April 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Adab Iranian Private School for Boys and Girls

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.adabschool.com
Telephone	04 2633405
Address	Dubai - Alqusais behind Albustan Centre P.O BOX 23259
Principal	Khosro Alimardan Farahmand
Curriculum	Iranian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / KG 1-Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	435
Largest nationality group of Students	Iranian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	18th to 20th November

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The context of the school

Al Adab Iranian Private School is situated in Al Qusais, Dubai. It opened in 1989 and the school moved to its present site in 1994. At the time of the inspection, the school provided education for 437 students, aged from three to 18 years. There had been a slight decrease in student numbers since the previous inspection. Almost all students were of Iranian nationality and a few were from Afghanistan and Pakistan. The school had identified 22 students with special educational needs. Across all year groups there was considerable movement of students.

In the Kindergarten (KG)1 class the curriculum was taught in Farsi. From KG 2 to Grade 6, students could choose between Farsi and English options. From Grades 7 to 12, the language of instruction was Farsi. Boys and girls were taught in separate classes from Grade 8 onwards. . The school followed the curriculum set by the Iranian Ministry of Education and students prepared for these examinations at the end of Grade 11.

There were 44 full-time teachers across the four phases of the school. Students were grouped into 23 classes. Almost all teachers had appropriate teaching qualifications and were deployed effectively across the school.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Good attainment in science and mathematics
- The improved teaching in high school
- Students' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to school and to their learning
- The positive relationships between students and teachers
- The strong sense of school as a community

Recommendations

- Monitor and evaluate teaching and learning to identify and share best practice
- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - Agreeing whole school teaching approaches based on international best practice
 - Developing learning skills, particularly in KG so that students find things out for themselves
 - Continuing to improve the range of assessment strategies in order to address the individual learning needs of all students
- Continue to develop structures and practices to identify and support students with special educational needs
- Review the curriculum to provide more opportunities for students to work co-operatively, use technology, study independently and conduct research to improve learning, attainment and progress

Progress since the last inspection

- Islamic Studies periods have been extended and teachers have attended workshops to address the recommendation.
- The time allocated to Arabic as an additional language now meets requirements.
- Teaching had improved in high school and it is now good.
- The school was now using software and websites including Edmodo to extend students' learning out of school.
- The phase supervisors and subject co-ordinators all become involved in monitoring and evaluating learning.
- The school had provided a great number of TV screens and Smart boards to help students' access Information Communication Technology (ICT) and support teaching and learning.

Trend of overall performance



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

	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
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Quality of students' learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Personal responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was acceptable across the school. Most of the students were good at shaping and pronouncing Arabic script in all phases. Students in the girls section of the school had good writing skills and were able to summarise simple texts. While most students could translate Arabic script easily, their understanding of the texts they read was limited, especially in the boys' section. Independent writing skills were limited. Students' ability to express their ideas orally varied widely across the school with girls' demonstrating relatively better levels of fluency and confidence.

Attainment in English was acceptable. Those students who were taught in English were particularly strong in grammar, confident in using reference materials and able to write accurately when topics had been prepared. For others, skills of extended writing and speaking were less well developed, particularly boys. Attainment in science was acceptable in KG and good in the other three phases. KG children could identify parts of the body and the different senses both in English and Farsi. Primary students had strong factual knowledge about the four major branches of science, in particular, biology. In middle school, students were studying chemical reactions and gravitational force at sophisticated levels, and high school students often used challenging mathematics in their studies of electrostatics, motion and atomic structure. Attainment in mathematics was acceptable in KG and good in the primary, middle and secondary school. In kindergarten, children made use of practical activities to cover basic understanding of number. In the primary grades, there was a definite progression of increasingly complex mathematics consistent with expected standards. In middle and secondary phases in both Farsi and English, students were able to apply their mathematical skills in order to solve problems.

In Arabic as an additional language, progress was acceptable across the school. Most of the students made appropriate progress in shaping Arabic script in the lower grades. They made steady progress in developing pronunciation and to learn an appropriate range of words. In middle and secondary, students' understanding of how to summarize writing increased, particularly in the girls' section. Progress in listening was in line with expectations while students' progress in speaking and independent writing was slow. Students up to and including middle school made acceptable progress in English. Good student involvement in the High school contributed to good progress. Small group sizes and better teacher knowledge of students' learning styles accelerated progress in skills of listening, speaking and reading. Progress in science was acceptable in KG and primary and good in middle and high school. There was a coherent progression in skills and knowledge through the grades in the key subjects. For example, KG students could name parts of the body, while grade 4 students examined human body systems in detail. By grade 11, students were carrying out project work into the detailed workings of the eye. In the primary school, lack of clear objectives inhibited student

progress. In mathematics, progress was acceptable in KG and good in primary, middle and high schools. In KG, lessons, whilst engaging and informative, did not lead to a consistent progression of learning. In primary, students displayed confidence and responded enthusiastically in lessons, which helped them make progress over time. Secondary students were challenged at appropriate levels.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning skills was acceptable across the school. Students were motivated and enjoyed learning. Whenever they were offered the opportunity, they took responsibility for their own learning. Most students collaborated well in a range of learning situations whenever they were given meaningful choices and involved in their learning as partners. There were few opportunities for students to apply their skills and understanding to solving problems or to think critically and apply their learning to everyday situations. Students lacked the opportunity to be proficient in finding out new information from a range of sources and making the fullest use of Information Technology (IT) in order to become even more successful learners. Recent access to the school's 'learning platform' was beginning to impact upon students' capacity to develop greater independence. Students had yet to be able to identify how well they had progressed and their strengths in learning.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal responsibility was good throughout the school. All students made a strong commitment to school life. They showed positive and responsible attitudes to all their school activities but especially the high expectations they set for themselves in lessons. Levels of attendance were good and almost all students arrived in school on time and were punctual in arriving to lessons. Students understood the importance of healthy eating but not all made healthy choices from the canteen at break time.

Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness was acceptable in kindergarten and good across the rest of the school. Students demonstrated clear understanding of the values of Islam and its influence on modern living in Dubai. They showed respect for different cultures at the same time as being proud of their own culture. Most students had strong knowledge of the UAE heritage and its culture and local traditions.

Students' community and environmental understanding was acceptable across the school. Students worked hard and demonstrated resourcefulness but they had no opportunity to develop their own projects in school

or within the wider community. Students understood some of the contributions they could make to Dubai but had limited knowledge about environmental problems. For example, few students had any knowledge about conservation and sustainability.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable in kindergarten, primary and middle school and good in high school. Most teachers knew their subjects well and how to teach them. Some teachers understood how students learned and devised learning activities that were appropriate to the age of their students. Too much talking by teachers and control of activities in kindergarten significantly slowed down progress. Some lessons were planned imaginatively with teachers making good use of a range of resources to enable students to learn successfully but this was not consistently observed. The quality of learning objectives were variable as was their usefulness in helping students to understand what they had learned during the lesson. Teaching strategies did not always meet the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and those with particular talents. In a few lessons especially in high school, teachers gave responsibility to students for their own learning. However in many lessons, teachers did not always facilitate collaborative and independent learning sufficiently, or require students to think deeply. Some teachers' interactions with students, particularly in high school, ensured that students were active participants in their learning and as a result, they made good progress.

The quality of assessment was acceptable across the school. Teachers knew their students well and had some knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. The school's internal system for data collection was at an early stage of development, as was the use of 'Edmodo' for standardised testing and grading. Arrangements to track and record student progress were not yet consistent enough. The analysis of data was underdeveloped. For example, the design and implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEP) to support those students with identified educational needs was at an early stage. Too little was seen of assessment information being used by teachers in classrooms to modify planning to ensure that all students were making appropriate progress. Teachers gave encouraging and positive feedback to students about the quality of their work, but often did not give sufficiently detailed information to help students make better progress. In some subject areas teachers were encouraging students to assess themselves.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable across the school. It was reviewed each year and provided a basic curriculum comprising of core academic subjects. There was evidence of balance and planning, continuity and progression in primary, middle and high school. However, there was a lack of continuity between the KG1 and KG2 curriculum. Students moved easily from one phase of the school to another, particularly students who progressed to higher education. There was some evidence of links between subjects but these were not developed as well as they could have been. IT was used in some classes but the interactive white boards were not used to their full capacity. Emerging research and critical thinking skills were observed at the upper end of the school but not in the other phases. Occasional visits out of school and visitors coming into the school enriched the curriculum. There were some limited opportunities for extra-curricular activities particularly for sport.

The curriculum designed to meet the individual needs of students was acceptable in all phases. The curriculum was occasionally modified to meet the needs of students, including those with special educational needs. Students in the higher grades had few opportunities to make choices about what subjects they wished to pursue. The use of the program Edmodo added extra interest and challenge and provided opportunities for students to extend their learning at home.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety was good across the school. Students arrived at school and left by bus or car in a safe, orderly manner. Play areas allowed students to play safely and cooperatively at break times, and there were more than enough staff on duty. The premises were safe and well-maintained and, where needed, well-supervised. The school had two well-equipped clinics that were managed by the school nurse, with regular visits from a doctor. Comprehensive health records for all students were kept at the clinic and all children received a check up at the beginning of the year. Leading a healthy lifestyle was promoted in science classes but this had not yet translated into healthy food choices by most students.

The quality of support was acceptable across the school. Staff-student relationships were very good in all phases, giving the school a welcoming atmosphere. Attendance and punctuality were well-managed and separate counsellors for boys and girls provided good support in a range of areas. The identification of students with special educational was not fully understood by the school and as a result some students were observed who would have benefitted from further support. The use of IEP's was still very much in the developing stages with students relying mainly on their peers for in-class support.

The use of the grade 12 handbook and an interview provided support for students wanting careers advice or the choice of universities.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The senior leadership team and all staff were enthusiastic and committed to the values and ethos of the school. The school was successful in ensuring that students not only made academic progress but also developed personally as a result of the positive ethos and purposeful relationships amongst staff and students. The school was successful in improving teaching in high school and in improving students' global and cultural awareness in primary and middle school. It was less successful in improving the consistency of teaching and learning across subjects and phases, especially in KG.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Senior leaders ensured that teaching staff and subject leaders were involved in compiling the self-evaluation and action plan but the interpretation of evidence to reach individual judgements was inconsistent. Some data did not support the school's view in a number of key areas. Performance management was in place and used to provide professional development for staff. Improvement plans were appropriately detailed but did not sufficiently focus on all the areas from the last inspection report. Nevertheless the school had made acceptable progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous report.

The school's work with parents and the community was good. The school placed great emphasis in engaging parents and regular reports and parent-teacher meetings provided parents with good information about their children's progress and attainment. The school offered parents a good range of information on its work through regular newsletters, all of which both informed and celebrated success. As a result of the use of EdModo, parents had good knowledge of what their children were learning and were in a better position to provide support when necessary.

Governance was good. The school governors held the school to account for standards and progress and attended meetings to analyse exam results. They provided regular support to school and in response to the previous inspection report, governors quickly approved a plan to purchase more data projection screen and Smart-boards for classrooms. The governing body included parent representatives and all were involved in school development planning to ensure that the school made appropriate provision for students.

Staffing facilities and resources were acceptable. The school was efficiently and effectively managed. There was an appropriate number of management personnel who fulfilled key roles to ensure that the full range

of the school's functions were delivered. All staff were well qualified and a number were experienced and longer serving. The school had a sound focus on inducting new teachers and in providing a range of ongoing and relevant training opportunities for others. Premises were clean and well maintained despite the lack of space in a number of classrooms. There was an improvement to the amount of IT available for the students and teachers. These were not always put to effective use in some of the lessons.

[View judgements](#)

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

The progress of SEN students was generally acceptable in key subjects in all phases. The SEN teacher had worked hard with parents and teachers to improve educational outcomes for SEN students. The school admitted all students, then screened them. Although there was not yet a school SEN policy, students were identified using the categories provided by KHDA. However, identification of SEN was mainly in terms of medical issues and did not include students who were gifted or talented. Twenty-two students were identified with SEN, but the inspection team observed other students who may have special educational needs. In classrooms, the effectiveness of provision relied mainly on how well the class teacher knew the child, and how well the teacher could then adapt lessons. In most lessons, students were supported by their peers. Curriculum modifications and IEPs were at an early stage. Some teachers used well thought out teaching strategies to provide for SEN students in their lessons. Test results of students were used to track progress, with on-going dialogue between parents and teachers. Some general targets were identified but were not adapted for individual students. There was some acceptable sharing of information, but no systematic tracking of progress. Parental involvement was good, mainly because of the school's overall inclusive "family" feel. All parents had formal access six times each year for progress reports, but the SEN leader was always available if needed. The leadership skills of the co-ordinator had helped the school make a positive start in its provision for SEN but there was more still to do.

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	196	39%
	Last year	37	9%
Teachers	36		60%
Students	72		71%

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

Almost all parents, students and teachers were happy with the quality of education provided by the school. They thought it was well led and that they were involved appropriately in school decision making. They thought that the school communicated well and that students were progressing well in all their subjects. All teachers, most parents and students thought that subject choices were good and that teachers helped their students improve their learning. They thought that the school looked after students' needs well. Students said that they felt safe and enjoyed coming to school and that if they raised any points of concern that these would be addressed. All teachers felt that they were a part of an effective team. All parents, students and teachers agreed that the school welcomed students with special educational needs.

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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