

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Towheed Iranian Boys School

Report published in April 2014

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Towheed Iranian Boys School

Location	Al Quoz 1
Type of school	Private
Website	www.bi-st.com
Telephone	04-3389953
Address	Al Meydan Road-P.O.BOX:33917
Principal	Amir Hossein Mohammmd Ali Rezaei
Curriculum	Iranian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / KG 1-Grade 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	752
Largest nationality group of Students	Iranian
Number of Emirati students	3 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	28th to 30th October 2013

## Contents

The context of the school .....	3
Overall school performance 2013-2014 .....	4
Key strengths .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
Progress since the last inspection .....	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills? .....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development? .....	7
How good are teaching and assessment?.....	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students? .....	8
How well does the school protect and support students? .....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....	8
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	14
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	15
What happens next? .....	16
How to contact us .....	16

## The context of the school

The Towheed Iranian School for Boys is located in Al Quoz. The school provides education for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, aged three to 18 years of age. Students in the school were mainly Iranians, no students studied Arabic as a first language although three students were Emiratis. The school had identified 16 students as having some form of special educational need. At the time of the inspection there were 752 students on roll.

The school had a Kindergarten (KG) with English as the language of instruction and two other sections; one following an Iranian curriculum and another following an international curriculum. The Iranian section followed the Iranian National Curriculum from Grades 1 to 12 with Farsi as the language of instruction. The International section followed an alternative curriculum from Grades 1 to 9 in English.

Students were enrolled in the Kindergarten, primary phase (Grades 1 to 5), middle phase (Grades 6 to 8) and a higher phase (Grades 9 to 12). The Iranian section provided education for boys only. The International section provided education for boys and girls. From Grade 4 onwards, boys and girls were taught in separate classes.

## Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- Attainment in English, mathematics and science, and progress in mathematics and science, in the middle and high school phases;
- Students' learning skills and teaching in the middle and high school phases;
- Students' personal and social development across all phases of the school;
- Partnerships with parents and the support of the governing body.

### Recommendations

- Raise the attainment and progress across all key subjects in the Kindergarten and primary phase, and Arabic in all phases;
- Improve teaching and learning in the Kindergarten and primary phase, and assessment across all phases by identifying, sharing and developing good practice from across the school;
- Ensure that leaders and managers are regularly engaged in monitoring, evaluation and taking effective action across all aspects of the school's work;
- Improve procedures for identifying, supporting, meeting and managing the educational needs of all groups of students especially those with special educational needs;
- The school should ensure that the curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language meets MoE requirements.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Improvements in the attainment of English in the middle and high school phases, and progress of English in the middle phase.

## Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Persian</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

	KG	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Quality of students' learning skills</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[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	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

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

In Arabic as an additional language, students showed good listening skills but their speaking and writing skills were less secure. Their use of grammar was in line with the curriculum expectations. In KG2, children's English speaking skills were good. Students in the other phases built upon these to become confident speakers of English. However, their attainment in creative writing was below expectations. Basic number skills were effectively promoted in the Kindergarten. By Grade 12, students had a good understanding of differential calculus although their research and thinking skills in mathematics were restricted by lack of opportunity. Students exhibited good practical skills in the science laboratories but did not have enough opportunities to develop them further.

In Arabic as an additional language, students made acceptable progress but lessons did not always support good language acquisition especially when it was conducted partially in Farsi. Students in the Kindergarten entered with limited English but progressed rapidly in speaking although their reading and writing were slower. This trend continued through the primary phase but in the middle phase students made better progress in all four language skills. Younger students made acceptable progress in number and shape while older students showed growing confidence in algebra, geometry and calculus. There was a coherent progression in skills and knowledge in science.

[View judgements](#)

## Quality of students' learning skills

Learning was acceptable in the Kindergarten and primary phase, and good in the middle and high school phases. Students were enthusiastic learners but had limited opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. They were attentive and diligent in almost every class and engaged in activities enthusiastically when the teaching was lively, challenging and interactive. Students supported each other well, for example, by collaborating in meaningful investigations in the upper primary onwards. Students had strong factual knowledge and they applied it well to real-life contexts in most subjects. However, few connections were made with other areas of learning. Students responded eagerly when provided with problems to solve and chances to think critically. Most students used information and communications technology (ICT) to produce quality work at home but did not use it sufficiently to explore and investigate in lessons.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students' personal development was good across all phases. The standard of behaviour was good except during free time and on the buses where some students were disrespectful of the bus supervisors and only followed instructions when the bus driver intervened. Nevertheless, students throughout the school were attentive and respectful in their lessons. Relationships between the teachers and the students and between students themselves were a strength of the school. Teachers knew their students well. Attendance was outstanding but punctuality less so after breaks and when classes moved around the building.

Students' understanding of Islamic culture was good as was their local, cultural and global awareness. They demonstrated an understanding of the impact of Islamic values on the society in Dubai. Almost all students showed respect when listening to the Holy Qur'an and the UAE National Anthem. Students had a good knowledge of the history of the UAE as a nation. They also knew about Emirati traditional sports and traditional dishes. However, their knowledge of other cultures was less secure.

Students' community and environmental responsibility was good across all phases. Students participated in bake sales to raise money for breast cancer, recycling paper, collecting cans and clean up days. Notice boards around the school showed a commitment to the environment and citizenship. Young children in the Kindergarten knew that they needed to clean up after themselves and be courteous to others. Students from Grade 4 upwards could talk confidently about environmental issues such as climate change.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable in the Kindergarten and primary phase, and good in the middle and high school phases. The best teachers had extensive subject knowledge and used it to good advantage. Teachers planned lessons and managed class time well. All lessons were characterised by supportive relationships between staff and students. Some lessons involved a variety of different activities to reinforce understanding and made good use of resources, especially in Arabic. In all phases, excessive teacher-talk limited learning. Teachers frequently answered their own questions. In the Kindergarten, in particular, opportunities for children to learn through play were often limited. Too much time was spent on repeating what children already knew. Throughout the school teaching to promote thinking and independent learning was infrequent. The use of technology was limited across the school.

Assessment was acceptable across all phases. The school conducted regular summative assessments at the end of each semester. A sophisticated information management system was used to record data and allow the school to analyse information and parents to view this via the school website. Teachers had a good understanding of the abilities of students. They gave oral feedback on student work but written feedback on how to improve work less frequent. Tests and exams were often limited to yes/no answers or filling in blanks so that opportunities to test the detail of students' knowledge were missed. Students were rarely required to write extensively. In a number of classrooms, longer essays and oral presentations allowed students to demonstrate their understanding in a more reliable manner.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable in all phases. The curriculum was broad, balanced and effectively planned to ensure progression in all subjects. Negotiations with the Iranian authorities allowed the school to offer a broader range of subjects across all phases and give the curriculum greater flexibility. All students were given the opportunity to experience physical, artistic and some technological subjects. Planning and reviewing occurred regularly, including a major annual review, taking account of parents' views and compliance issues. The curriculum was enriched with an extensive programme of educational visits as well as a significant number of extra-curricular activities. The school did not fulfil the KHDA requirements for Islamic Education or for those students who should be taking Arabic as a first language.

Curriculum design was acceptable across all phases and offered choice and specialism as students progressed through the school. Students had the flexibility to transfer between the two curricula on offer in the school. However, the curricula did not fully meet the needs of all students and took little account of the needs of groups of students, such as higher attainers and those with special education needs. Higher attainers were not extended with further challenge and students with special educational needs were not identified and supported.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school's arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of all students were acceptable. The school had worked hard to address health and safety issues arising from the last inspection. For example, the play area in Kindergarten was now safe and fire evacuation procedures had been tightened and practised. The quality of maintenance was good and the buildings were kept in good repair. However, healthy eating options were not being pursued and staff were unaware of child protection policies. Arrangements to ensure safety on school transport were unsatisfactory; students did not wear seatbelts and several buses were overcrowded. In addition, there was further concern that bus supervisors were disrespected and some students failed to follow their instructions regarding safety while the buses were travelling.

The quality of support for students was acceptable. There were good relationships between students and staff across all phases and the majority of students said that they enjoyed life at school. Behaviour concerns were quickly resolved and shared with parents. Attendance was managed well and latecomers were recorded and referred to their class teachers. However, students with special needs were not formally identified and there was no manager or coordinator of special educational needs. As a consequence, the support in classes was patchy and not fully matched to students' needs. Higher attaining students were not sufficiently stretched and challenged.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The principal, suitably supported by the vice-principal, provided determined and purposeful leadership. Assistant principals and subject leaders provided committed support for the school but their support was disjointed with too much variation in terms of practices, procedures and philosophies. Relationships between leaders and staff were professional and purposeful. The extended leadership group were not sufficiently able to identify and address weaknesses, for example in attainment and progress in Kindergarten and the primary phase.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The school's self-evaluation was detailed and extensive but suffered from too much description and too little evaluation. Action planning, focused on becoming implementing the alternative curriculum offer but failed to deal with basic shortcomings such as the quality of teaching. Departmental action plans lacked rigour, focus and suitable actions to address shortfalls. The monitoring of teaching and learning had contributed to improvements but lesson

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observations were focused too much on what teacher were doing rather than what students were learning.

Professional development was supportive but not sufficiently linked to priorities arising from lesson observations. Recommendations from the last inspection report had not been addressed.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Links between school and home were very productive with a strong and well-established parent-teacher association which was valued by the school. Parents were well informed through regular reports, meetings and daily diaries. Parents said that the school was quick to sort any issues raised. Links with the wider community through sports and visits were productive.

Governance was good. School owners and significant numbers of parents played significant roles in supporting the school. Governors visited and reported back about the school at regular intervals. They had a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors supported staff professional development including visits to other national and international schools.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. In the Kindergarten a lack of qualified teachers had affected the quality of teaching. An extensive programme of professional development was firmly established although too much focused on the new curriculum rather than developing teaching and learning. The use of resources was not consistent across the phases or across the curricula. For example, the classrooms in the Iranian curriculum were sparse with little display work and no data projectors. This was in contrast to those in the International section. Students expressed their concern about such inequality. Sporting and science facilities were good but the provision for technology across the school required improvement. The range of books in the library was narrow.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students with special education needs (SEN) made acceptable progress but the school's support for their needs was unsatisfactory. The school's interpretation of special needs was mostly based on medical or health related conditions. Staff did not have the level of understanding, knowledge or experience to deal with students having specific learning difficulties. Staff were unaware of KHDA's SEN guidance documentation.

Support for students with special needs was not planned and, since students were not identified, there were no strategies in place to help them such as, individual education plans, modification of the curriculum and involvement of parents. There was no one coordinating the support for students with special educational needs and no systems in place to identify students on entry to the school or during their time in the school. No students had been identified as gifted or talented.

## 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	103	12%
	Last year	135	24%
Teachers	50		55%
Students	61		53%

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

Just over one tenth of the parents responded to the survey which was lower than the previous year. Parents were generally positive about the school and felt their children were making good progress in English, mathematics and science but were concerned about progress in Arabic. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education available at the school. They said that their children enjoyed school and felt safe in the school and on the buses. However, a few parents and a minority of students expressed concern about safety on the buses. Most parents agreed that school reports and meetings were regular and supportive. A minority of parents expressed concern about the range of subjects in the curriculum and did not feel students made enough use of technology. Most parents felt that the school was well led. The survey was also undertaken by about half of the teachers and the older students in the school. Almost all teachers were satisfied with the quality of education. They felt that students were well behaved and agreed that the school was led well. Most students felt they made good progress in mathematics and science. A quarter of students did not feel they made enough use of technology and one fifth did not feel that the school sufficiently supported in their specific learning 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.

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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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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