

INSPECTION REPORT

The School of Research Science

Report published in April 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The School of Research Science

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.srsdubai.ae
Telephone	04-6011011
Address	P. O. Box 27463, Dubai
Principal	Ms. Nan Billingham
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Year Groups	3-18 / Foundation Stage to Year 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	1,641
Largest nationality group of Students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	993 (61%)
Date of the inspection	21st to 24th January 2013

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013	4
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
Progress since the last inspection	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of 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?.....	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	14
What happens next?.....	15
How to contact us	15

The context of the school

The School of Research Science is located in Al Qusais. At the time of the inspection, the roll had increased by around 16 per cent compared to the previous year. The roll comprised 1,641 boys and girls aged from three to 18 years.

The school followed a curriculum which was based on the National Curriculum for England and Wales for most subjects, and the Ministry of Education guidance for others. Students took GCSE and IGCSE examinations in secondary school at the end of Year 11. They took GCE A/S level examinations in the post-16 phase at the end of Year 12.

Including the senior leadership team, there were 138 teachers, all appropriately qualified. A significant number of new staff members had been appointed to middle positions of responsibility at the start of the school year. Teachers were supported by 44 support staff members. Most students were of Emirati or other Arab nationality. Around half of all students were in the primary phase, with roughly one quarter in the secondary phase, and only around four per cent at the post-16 phase.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- Improvements in students' progress in various subjects in the Foundation Stage and primary phase, including in Arabic as an additional language in the primary phase;
- Students' understanding of Islamic values and local and wider culture, and improvements in attitudes and behaviour in the Foundation Stage and primary phase;
- High quality teaching, learning and assessment across almost all of the school;
- The outstanding curriculum, which offered opportunities for independence in learning, creativity and consideration of global issues;
- Strong leadership, which was helping the staff to take responsibility for leadership and improvement.

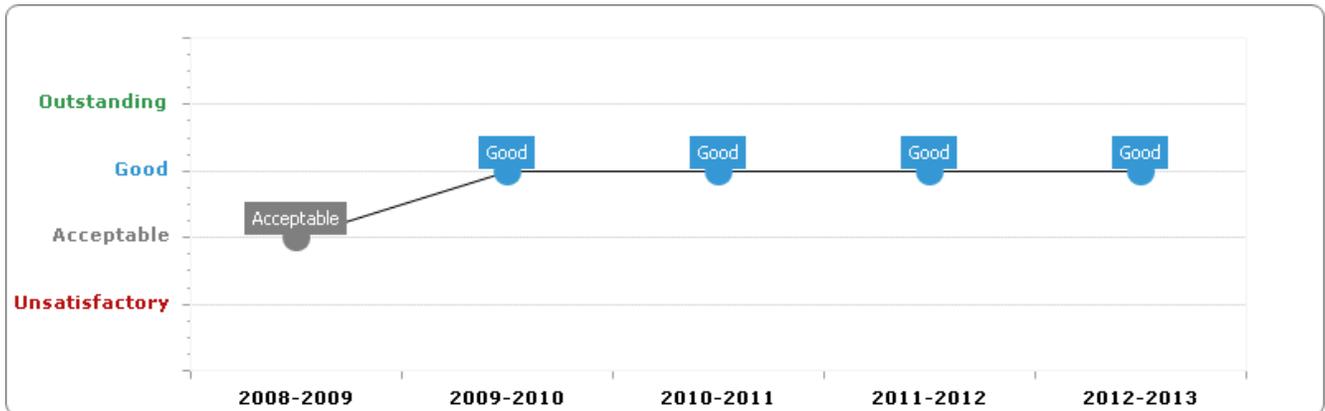
Recommendations

- Continue to raise the progress and attainment of students where necessary;
- Continue to encourage students to take greater responsibility and have higher aspirations, particularly in respect of attendance and punctuality, and especially the older students;
- Involve all staff members further in gathering and analysing assessment data to inform the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Progress since the last inspection

- The school had improved on five judgements in students' progress and attainment. For example, mathematics attainment in the Foundation Stage had moved from acceptable to good. Progress in science had improved from good to outstanding in the Foundation Stage and primary phase;
- Nine judgements for progress and attainment had fallen. For example, progress in Arabic as a first language was good in the secondary and post-16 phases, having been outstanding the previous year.
- Staff members had been very successful in improving the quality of the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment, almost all aspects of which were outstanding.

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

The students' attainment was outstanding at all phases in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language, and in the secondary phase in science. It was good elsewhere, apart from English and science in the Foundation Stage, where it was acceptable. Most students had good knowledge about Islamic principles. Most students could explain the chapters of The Holy Qur'an. They understood many of the Prophet's Hadeeth. In Arabic as a first language, external examination results were high. Older boys had better attainment than girls in writing and speaking. Students learning Arabic as an additional language demonstrated high levels of reading, listening and writing skills. In English, writing skills were less well developed than other aspects. In mathematics, good understanding of shapes and numbers, co-ordinates, standard form and algebraic fractions was shown across the four phases of the school. In science, attainment in the Foundation Stage and primary phase was acceptable and good respectively. The students' understanding and skills were outstanding in physics, chemistry and biology in the secondary phase and good in the post-16 phase in the Advanced level courses.

Progress was outstanding in almost all subjects in the Foundation Stage and primary phase. The exception was Islamic Education at the primary phase, where it was good. Progress was good in almost all subjects in the secondary and post-16 phases. The exceptions were Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language at the secondary phase, where progress was outstanding. In Islamic Education, students made progress in line with the quality of teaching. In Arabic as a first language, able students were not sufficiently challenged. Students learning Arabic as an additional language were increasing their confidence in reading. In English, most Foundation Stage children quickly developed early skills in English as learners, and these skills were built upon in later stages. In mathematics, a significant proportion of students made better than expected progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and primary phase. In science, early progress was rapid, and this helped students to have good progress against the increased demands at later phases.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding in the Foundation Stage and primary phase, and good in the secondary and post-16 phases. On the whole, and particularly in the lower years, students took pride in their work, demonstrated positive attitudes. Relationships were positive, and students respected each other and their teachers. Almost all students responded well to the advice provided by the school on adopting a healthy lifestyle. Attendance was acceptable overall. Although the school had adopted strategies to improve punctuality, a significant number of students were late to lessons. In all phases, students'

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understanding of Islamic values was outstanding, as was their local, cultural and global awareness. They understood how Islam influenced dress, food, business values and relationships. They showed well-developed knowledge of the culture of the United Arab Emirates, and an appreciation of the wider world. Community and environmental responsibility was good at all phases. Students engaged in a wide range of activities in the community, including helping to refurbish a local mosque. They participated in charity and environmental projects. While they initiated some projects, most were suggested for them.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching in the key subjects was outstanding in the Foundation Stage, primary and secondary phases, and good in the post-16 phase. Teachers had very good knowledge of their subjects and how to promote good learning. They planned lessons well and paid good attention to early literacy in the Foundation Stage and primary phase. Dialogue was generally of high quality. Lesson timings were expertly judged and provided excellent pace and challenge, and time for students to reflect at the end of lessons. Lessons were also planned successfully to meet the differing individual needs and abilities of students. Additional learning support was effectively targeted. Almost all teachers displayed effective classroom management skills. While outstanding teaching existed in all phases, it was less evident in the post-16 phase. Teaching in other subjects, for example information technology, swimming and geography, was often outstanding.

The quality of students' learning was outstanding in the Foundation Stage, primary and secondary phases and good in the post-16 phase. Almost all students were engaged by their learning activities and successfully encouraged to take pride in their work. Some older students were not fully motivated to tackle the learning challenges provided by their teachers. Students enjoyed working together and collaborated very well. They benefited from teachers' emphasis on applications of learning to the real world. Their learning was also enhanced by connections between concepts in different areas, for example between Islamic values and science. Their learning was enriched by opportunities to acquire enquiry and critical thinking skills.

Assessment across the school was outstanding. Teachers consistently applied a thorough system of gathering and analysing data to help them track the attainment and progress of individual students. They regularly promoted peer and self-assessment among students. Individual targets were set as part of the process and were subsequently monitored by teachers. Teachers often used open questions to make students think for themselves and to help the teachers to assess students' understanding. Teachers had an excellent knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. Most students understood how well they were doing and what they needed to do to improve. In most subjects, teachers marked the workbooks of individual students to give each student helpful advice about progress and next steps in learning. Teachers

used assessment information very effectively to help them plan lessons which supported and challenged all groups of students.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was outstanding across all phases of the school. It was well designed to reflect the school's values and support its bilingual character. It had been reviewed and enhanced over the last year. There was greater subject choice for older students, including physical education to examination level, law and enterprise. Leaders worked with subject co-ordinators and successfully ensured progression and continuity in students' learning across phases. Transition arrangements between phases of the school were extremely well planned and implemented. Parents and students were involved in review, and parents were fully informed about all aspects of the curriculum. The curriculum was planned to meet the needs of all students. Learning mentors had been introduced to ensure full access to the curriculum for all students. Cross-curricular links were well developed and provided meaningful contexts in which students could learn. Extra-curricular activities were extensive and offered students many new and exciting experiences. These included sports, field trips, projects and overseas and other visits.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for students' health and safety were outstanding at all phases. The systems to ensure the school environment was safe, secure and hygienic were monitored and regularly reviewed. All staff members were conscientious about safe practices and played their part in reducing risks throughout the school day. They monitored risks from vehicle traffic at the beginning and end of the school day systematically. Equipment was kept in good repair, and hazardous materials were stored safely. Students' health and well-being were monitored by medical and guidance staff in partnership with parents. Opportunities to promote healthy lifestyles were an integral part of the curriculum.

Teachers and senior leaders had built excellent relationships with the students. The school had very effective strategies for promoting and maintaining good behaviour. These strategies were successful, particularly in the Foundation Stage and primary phase. Misbehaviour which occasionally arose during the school day was dealt with in a low-key but effective manner. Students were given clear and helpful guidance as they considered their next steps in education or work on leaving school. There were effective measures for ensuring the well-being of students during their time at school, including strong links with parents. The school was working to improve punctuality and attendance.

[View judgements](#)

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

Staff members with leadership responsibilities in the area of special educational needs carried out their work very well. Their identification of students with special educational needs was, on the whole, reliable and accurate. However, the range of strategies and resources for the identification of more specific needs such as dyslexia were underdeveloped. Teachers provided well-targeted and effective support for students in the classroom. They successfully matched tasks and activities to groups of students with diverse needs, including gifted and talented students. The additional support provided by the newly appointed learning mentors in each phase was enabling younger students in particular to make good progress against their individual learning plans. The corridors where learning mentors worked with students did not always offer a quiet or distraction-free environment.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was outstanding. Supported by the governors, the principal and her senior colleagues set out a clear vision and direction for the school. Almost all parents, students and staff understood and accepted the high aspirations which the school held. Senior leaders ensured that a wide range of people were responsible and accountable for major aspects and initiatives. Staff worked together well. Their efforts had resulted in improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. The school's capacity to improve further was high.

The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning was good. The school's strategic plan and improvement plan contained key priorities which had been identified accurately. Staff employed a wide range of approaches to monitoring and evaluating the school's work, including surveys, analysis of data and lesson observations. The system for appraising teachers and supporting them to improve their lessons was very systematic and successful. Senior leaders did not always carry out analysis of assessment data accurately to judge the overall quality of students' progress and attainment.

Partnership with parents and the community was outstanding. The governing body had parent representatives. The 'Friends and Supporters' group supported events such as the business souks run by students in the primary and secondary sections. These events were a positive feature of the students' learning. The school provided regular, helpful reports and meetings for parents on their children's academic and personal progress and development. Parents' attendance at a range of informative events about the curriculum was high. The school also used text messages and telephone appropriately to contact parents. Parents' use of an on-line communication site was increasing. Community links were widespread and productive.

Governance was outstanding. The governors took an active interest and involvement in the school, and provided helpful advice and support. Sub-committees involving all stakeholders also provided advice and guidance, and ensured accountability. The board received regular reports from the principal and from other leaders when required. The school had a detailed set of policies and procedures which were reviewed on a two-yearly cycle.

Management was outstanding. The day-to-day work of the school proceeded smoothly. The support staff made positive contributions. Teaching staff were of high quality and were deployed well. The premises and learning environment were of high quality too, and were maintained to a high standard. The library was a positive feature of the school. Resources were in plentiful supply, with only a small number of minor shortages.

[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 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	174	21%
	Last year	213	32%
Teachers	87		61%
Students	142		68%

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

A majority of teachers and students responded to their surveys. Around one fifth of parents, a decrease from the previous year, did likewise. Almost all parents thought that the quality of teaching and learning was good. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education. They agreed that their children's progress in Islamic Education, Arabic and English was good. A majority agreed that progress was good in mathematics and science. Views about their children's personal and social development were, on the whole, positive. A minority had negative views about careers guidance and procedures for dealing with bullying. Most students stated that they were treated fairly. Most parents and teachers thought that the school was well led. Most teachers, but only majorities of parents and students thought that school leaders listened to their views.

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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