

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Russian International School

Report published in April 2014

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Russian International School

|                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Location                              | Muhaisnah 4                    |
| Type of school                        | Private                        |
| Website                               | www.dubairuschool.com          |
| Telephone                             | 04-2641515                     |
| Address                               | P O Box 235047, Dubai          |
| Principal                             | Liudmila Kashurnikova          |
| Curriculum                            | Russian                        |
| Gender of students                    | Boys and Girls                 |
| Age / Grades or Year Groups           | 4-17 / Kindergarten 1-Grade 11 |
| Attendance                            | Acceptable                     |
| Number of students on roll            | 475                            |
| Largest nationality group of students | Russian                        |
| Number of Emirati students            | Less than 1%                   |
| Date of the inspection                | 17th to 19th March 2014        |

## 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 Russian International School, located in Al Muhaisnah, is a private school providing for boys and girls aged four to 17, from Kindergarten to Grade 11. The school opened in September 2011. It follows the Russian Federation curriculum through the medium of Russian. Grade 11 students sit the appropriate unified state examinations.

At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 475 students and just over a third of students had joined during the current academic year. Fifteen different nationalities were represented among the student population; approximately a third of students were Russian and less than one per cent was Emirati. Students were grouped in 24 classes. Almost ten per cent of the students had been formally identified by the school as having some form of special educational need.

There were 39 teachers, most of whom held appropriate qualifications. Approximately a quarter of the teaching members of staff had joined the school in the current academic year. The Principal was in her third year in post.

## Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- Good attainment and progress in Russian language and literature, and mathematics in all phases;
- Students' positive behaviour, strong work ethic and good manners;
- Good systems for ensuring students' health and safety;
- Stakeholders' pride in celebrating Russian culture and being an active part of the Russian community in Dubai.

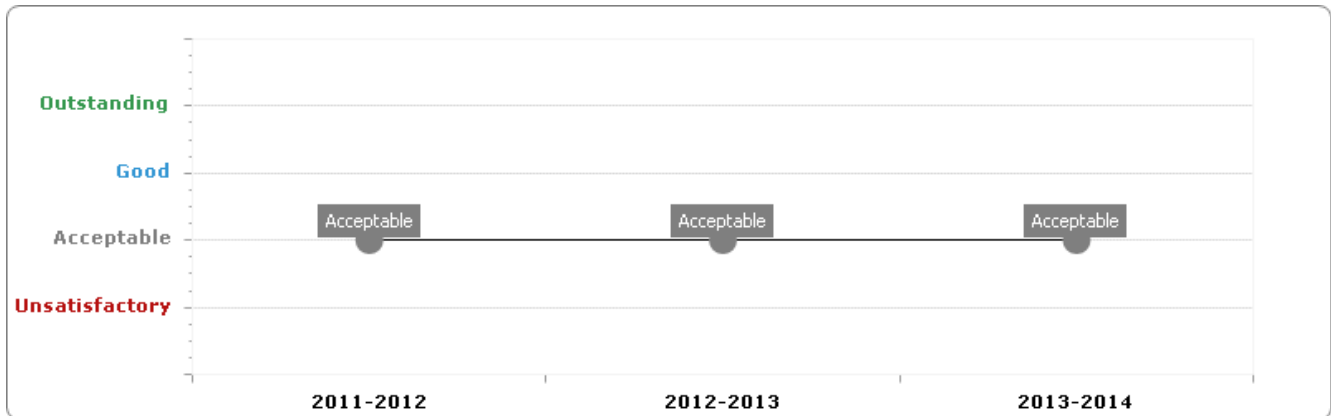
### Recommendations

- Ensure the school is compliant with Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements for Grades 5 to 9 in Arabic as an additional language.
- Improve the consistency of good and better teaching and learning throughout the school to improve progress levels across all subjects.
- Use assessment data to inform teaching and modify the curriculum to meet the needs of all students.
- Organise visits and other activities which involve students becoming more involved with the local surroundings and develop more cross-curricular links.
- Improve the accuracy of identification and the consistency of support and challenge in lessons for students with special educational needs (SEN).

## Progress since the last inspection

- Attainment in middle and secondary Islamic Education and primary Arabic as an additional language had improved for most students.
- Progress in middle and secondary Islamic Education, primary and middle Arabic as an additional language, and Kindergarten English had all improved.
- Across all phases, the arrangements for the health, safety and security of the students had improved.
- Effective self-evaluation engaging all stakeholders was becoming embedded at the school.
- Improvement in a majority of students' learning outcomes in Arabic and Islamic Education as a result of establishing a team of specialist staff.

## Trend of overall performance



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

|   | KG             | Primary        | Middle         | Secondary      |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Islamic Education</b>                |                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Unsatisfactory | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Unsatisfactory | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>Arabic as a first language</b>       |                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| <b>Arabic as an additional language</b> |                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Acceptable     | Unsatisfactory | Not Applicable |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Good           | Acceptable     | Not Applicable |
| <b>Russian</b>                          |                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Good           | Good           | Good           | Good           |
| Progress                                | Good           | Good           | Good           | Good           |
| <b>English</b>                          |                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                      |                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Good           | Good           | Good           | Good           |
| Progress                                | Good           | Good           | Good           | Good           |
| <b>Science</b>                          |                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |

[Read paragraph](#)

|                                      | KG         | Primary    | Middle     | Secondary  |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Quality of students' learning skills | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

|                                 | KG         | Primary    | Middle     | Secondary  |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Assessment                      | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)



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

|  | KG         | Primary    | Middle     | Secondary  |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 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     | Secondary  |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 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                                | Acceptable   |
| Governance   | Acceptable   |
| Management, including staffing, facilities and resources | Acceptable   |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable in the middle and secondary phase, but unsatisfactory in the primary phase. A few primary students could recite short Surahs, mention the Pillars of Islam, or knew basic facts about the Prophet (PBUH). Elsewhere, most students could explain examples of Islamic practice such as requirements for clothing. They understood the logic behind the rules of Hijab and could recite a significant number of supplications. However, Quran recitation skills were weak. In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was acceptable in the primary phase but unsatisfactory in the middle phase.

A majority of primary students used a reasonable range of words, spoke confidently with a few errors and were able to write a few sentences or a short paragraph. Students' language skills in the middle phase were below expected levels in relation to the number of years they had studied the language. Attainment in English was acceptable. In Kindergarten, children read out and understood familiar names, words and very simple sentences; they often needed pictures to help them. Primary and middle students understood the main points of clear speech or passages using familiar language with relevant content; more able secondary students could understand lengthy dialogues on a range of subjects including unfamiliar materials. Writing was weaker in all phases. Attainment in Russian was good across all phases. A strong feature in Kindergarten was the development of listening skills. Most middle students had attainment above curriculum expectation in listening, speaking, reading and writing and their awareness of grammatical patterns was well developed. Throughout the school, attainment in mathematics was good. Students had good mathematical understanding, especially in number, algebra and geometry. Students' ability to apply their knowledge was stronger in the secondary phase than in the other phases of the school. Across all phases, attainment in science was acceptable. Students demonstrated acceptable knowledge and understanding of key concepts in their discussions with the teacher, presentations and written work.

Judgements for progress mirrored those for attainment, except in Arabic as an additional language. In this subject, primary students made good progress and secondary students made acceptable progress. In Islamic Education, students in the middle and secondary phases made acceptable progress in understanding Islamic concepts and in relating their learning to real-life situations. There was some improvement in Quran memorisation and recitation skills across the school. In Arabic as an additional language, most students made significant progress in their extended writing skills. In English, progress in speaking and listening strengthened as students moved through the school. In Russian, secondary students spoke fluently and at length to express their point of view or give an explanation; most were developing writing at a level above curriculum expectations. By the end of primary, the majority of students wrote accurate essays in which they expressed opinions and gave explanations. In mathematics, secondary students made good progress in their ability to use their knowledge of formulae and symbols to

solve increasingly complex equations. In science, students in all phases met expectations in developing understanding of main concepts.

[View judgements](#)

## Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning skills was acceptable across the school. Students collaborated sensibly when they were given the opportunity to work in groups. They were rarely engaged in enquiry-based activities or given opportunities to do independent research and these skills were under-developed. Overall, they had a positive attitude towards learning and felt responsible for their own progress. They used homework very well, especially in mathematics and Russian, to reinforce newly learned concepts. In many lessons, students supported one another in learning even when it was not part of the lesson planning. They linked their learning to prior knowledge and to the real world quite well in English, mathematics, Russian and science. However, their use of information and communication technology (ICT) and resources beyond the textbook was limited.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students' personal responsibility was good across the school. Behaviour in lessons was overwhelmingly good or better and students responded well to critical feedback. Some students, however, were passive in lessons and did not take enough initiative. Most displayed mature and sensible attitudes in classrooms and around the school, even when they were unsupervised. Attendance was acceptable. Relationships between students and with adults were generally positive and cordial. Older students helped younger ones and carried out responsibilities round the school. Students had positive attitudes to healthy living and generally followed the school's advice on keeping fit and healthy. The school had provided additional physical education and dance classes to ensure better fitness.

Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness were acceptable. Students demonstrated a basic understanding of Islamic values and their impact on everyday life in Dubai. Their behaviour and attitudes reflected tolerance, friendship and respect. They had a basic knowledge of the Emirati traditions and heritage, and the development of UAE. Most students proudly described their own culture, providing many details and examples. They were aware of cultural diversity in Dubai, but had limited knowledge or personal experience of it in the broader community.

Students' community and environmental responsibility was acceptable across the phases. Students were responsible members of their school community. They made their voice heard at school by using a

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suggestions box. They were proud of their school and helped to keep it clean. They participated in projects that had a positive impact on the local community as they donated money to the poor and conducted surveys on healthy living in the local community. However, they were not the initiators of such projects. They had a positive work ethic that considered hard work the only way to success. Students' understanding of global environmental issues was underdeveloped especially in primary school. They found it difficult to explain how the environment of Dubai had changed over the years and found it challenging to name major environmental issues currently faced in the world.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable across the phases. Teachers had secure subject knowledge, but their understanding of how students learned varied. In the better lessons, they established a positive environment for students to learn. Their lessons were well planned in Russian, Arabic and Islamic Education, but lessons generally did not provide students with enough opportunities to learn actively. A minority of teachers were creative in making their own resources to enhance learning whenever resources were required but not readily available. Teachers, however, did not use ICT consistently and did not vary the learning activities well enough across the school. Teaching was mostly based too much on text-books. Differentiation in lessons to meet the needs of different groups of students was underdeveloped; this limited students' opportunities to develop critical thinking and research skills consistently.

Assessment was acceptable in all phases of the school. Assessment systems took account of a range of test results and teachers' assessments of students' work. Students' progress was systematically tracked and additional plans put in place for those who were underachieving. However, the impact of such planning on students' progress was inconsistent. School leaders made effective use of assessment information to enhance subject action planning. Most teachers gave helpful oral feedback to students during lessons. Although their work was marked regularly, few students received written feedback or guidance on how to improve. Insufficient use was made of students' self-assessment.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable. The curriculum was well planned and adequately broad and balanced. The school had reviewed the curriculum and lengthened the school day to make Islamic Education compliant with MoE requirements, to increase the time for Arabic and physical education and to introduce a range of new subjects at all phases. However, the curriculum did not comply with the MoE requirement for the teaching time of Arabic as an additional language from Grades 5 to 9. There were not enough cross-curricular initiatives in lessons. There were inconsistent opportunities for the development of higher order thinking skills and the school did not provide sufficient activities which involved students with the local surroundings. A strong feature of the curriculum was the use of homework assignments to develop independent learning and research.

Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students was acceptable in all phases. The school had made some adjustments to the curriculum to meet the needs and interests of different groups of students, for example, through the addition of lessons such as dance and creative curriculum. Internet online competitions and other activities additional to the day-to-day curriculum were provided to allow students to explore and follow their interests, particularly for students who were gifted or talented. However, in lessons the curriculum was not modified consistently well to provide sufficient challenge for these students. Curriculum modification for students with SEN who have difficulty with their learning was variable but acceptable overall.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school had good provision for health and safety. It ran its daily transport operation safely and efficiently and students consistently used seatbelts on buses. The school building, equipment and resources were maintained in good condition through scheduled maintenance checks and were suited for the educational needs of almost all students. The school nurse and part-time physician provided students with sound health services, kept updated health-related records on all students, and stored medicines securely. Healthy living was promoted systematically throughout the school especially in lessons. Although the canteen served healthy food items such as salads, it also had less healthy choices, such as burgers and pizzas, available to students. A clear child protection policy was in place and known to all stakeholders.

The quality of support provided for students was acceptable in all phases. Good teacher-student relationships were evident across the school. Staff members knew the personal and academic strengths and weaknesses of their students well. Good systems were in place to deal with any problems or

concerns. Procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality were effective. Due to a lack of staff expertise, diagnostic testing of students' specific needs was not sufficiently detailed. Individual education plans for students were in place for students identified as having general learning difficulties. These plans provided adequate guidance for teachers but were not consistently followed when planning or delivering lessons. There was insufficient challenge in most lessons for those identified as gifted and talented.

[View judgements](#)

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

Leadership of the school was acceptable. The Principal provided clear direction and was the driving force for development. The leadership team had monitoring and supporting roles, which underpinned the improving professional development of staff. Training sessions were making an increased contribution to on-going school review and improvement. A majority of the senior staff demonstrated capacity to secure further improvements. There had been widespread engagement in the development of an effective improvement plan and there was shared ownership in implementing change and improvements. More coherent and concise direction from leaders was impacting on class teachers' ability to work in a consistent way to improve attainment and progress in all grades.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Formal processes for self-evaluation involving the leadership team and teachers were in place. Self-evaluation took into account the views of students, parents, the governors and the staff. Appropriate development priorities had been identified and strategies had been introduced to help the school improve. The leadership team monitored the quality of teaching and learning across the school and gave feedback to teachers about their performance. Regular meetings ensured staff were kept informed of, and involved with, the improvement agenda at the school. However, the impact of such activities had yet to be reflected in improvements to learning outcomes in all key subjects in all grades. The school had made a positive response to the previous inspection report recommendations and the school's own improvement issues, with a strong focus on individual accountability and peer support.

The school's partnerships with parents were acceptable. The open door policy adopted by the school meant that parents were able to consult easily with class teachers or senior leaders about any matters of concern. The parents valued the clear guidance they received about how to help their children with their learning and personal development, and spoke highly of the school's willingness to make extra efforts to support families. Parents were proud of the role the school played in celebrating Russian culture and being an active part of the Russian community in Dubai. Productive links with the local and broader Dubai communities, businesses and schools were underdeveloped.

Governance was acceptable. There was direct parent and community nominated representation on the School Board of 13 members, which included a student representative. The school received support from the School Board in key areas; the professional leadership of the school was held to account for its performance. Governors were involved in the on-going reviews of the school's effectiveness and had a significant input into the self-evaluation process.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The qualifications and experience of teachers and other staff matched the demands of the curriculum; an effective Arabic department had been established since the last inspection. Facilities that supported learning, such as science and laboratories, libraries and activity rooms had undergone improvements, although outdoor sports facilities remained limited. ICT resources had been enhanced by the acquisition of interactive whiteboards.

[View judgements](#)

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

Provision for students with SEN was acceptable and resulted in acceptable progress. The school had an inclusive ethos accepting all students irrespective of their ability level. Improvement had been made to the system to identify students with SEN but this remained limited due to the absence of any member of staff with specific special needs expertise. The school policy and procedures to guide staff were detailed; this ensured good levels of involvement of parents and students in planning to meet individual needs. Individual education plans were in place for students identified as having general learning difficulties but these were not always used sufficiently when planning lessons to ensure the provision of suitable support. The curriculum was not modified well enough to ensure an adequate level of challenge for students identified as gifted and 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 | 99 | 27%        |
|                          | Last year | 86 | 24%        |
| Teachers                 | 29        |    | 88%        |
| Students                 | 56        |    | 86%        |

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

Most parents and teachers were satisfied with the quality of education at the school. A majority of the parents and students felt that good progress was made in Arabic as an additional language; most students and parents agreed that good progress was made in English and mathematics. Almost all parents believed that their children enjoyed life at school and that the teachers provided a good quality education. Most students felt the teachers were skilled and well-qualified. Almost all teachers indicated that they participated in the school self-evaluation and improvement planning. Approximately a half of the students felt the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities was limited. Almost all teachers and most parents believed the school to be well led and that their opinions were listened to by the school leaders. A majority of parents and students reported that teachers made sure that students knew how to improve and that the school provided appropriate guidance for future educational and career choices.



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

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