

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai National School - Al Twar

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai National School - Al Twar

Location	Al Twar
Type of school	Private
Website	www.Dnschool.net
Telephone	04-298-8555
Address	P.O. Box 20057
Principal	Amjad Jubr,
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	2,095
Largest nationality group of Students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	1,591 (76%)
Date of the inspection	27th to 31st January 2013

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013	3
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 good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	9
How good is the students' personal and social development?	9
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	10
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	11
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	11
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	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

At the time of the inspection, Dubai National School, Al Twar branch, had a roll of 2,095 students. The roll had increased from the previous year by about 100 students. The school provided education for students aged three to 18 years.

Curriculum programmes in English, mathematics and science were broadly based on an US framework. Some other subjects followed the UAE Ministry of Education guidelines. The school had achieved accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Students could sit a range of external tests to benchmark their attainment against international standards.

There were 193 full-time teachers, 18 per cent of whom were in their first year in the school. Almost all teachers were suitably qualified. The school employed a large number of support staff, and 30 classroom assistants who were mainly deployed in the Kindergarten and in the lower elementary phases. Emirati students made up 76 per cent of the school roll, and almost all students were of Arab nationality. The school had identified 63 students with special educational needs, many of whom were taught for part of the school week in an 'Easy Learners' section. The Principal had been in post for 14 years.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The good attainment and progress in Islamic Education and in Arabic as an additional language;
- The attention paid by staff members to promoting healthy lifestyles and keeping students safe;
- The identification of the needs of students in the Easy Learning Section in the elementary school, leading to their good progress, especially in English and mathematics.

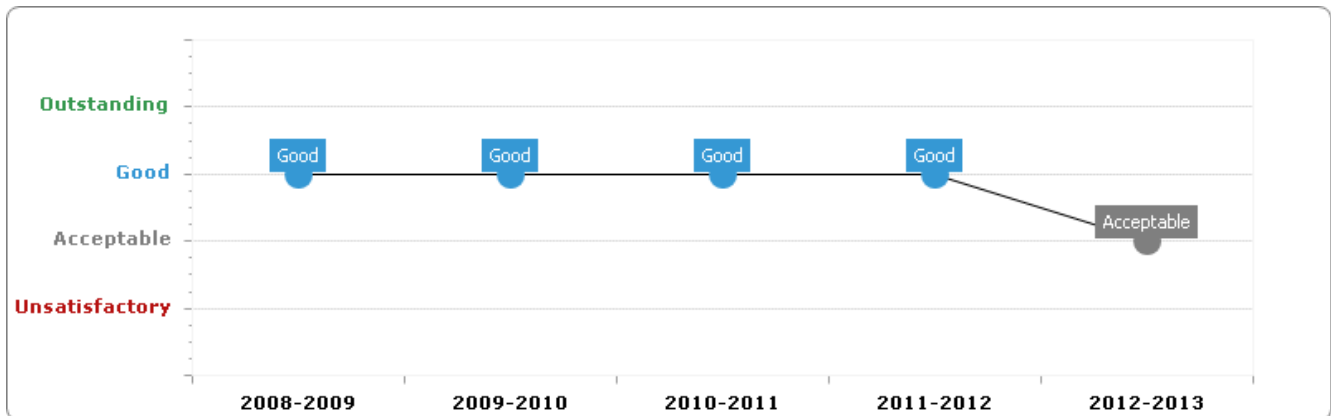
Recommendations

- Raise students' attainment and improve their progress in the key subjects;
- Ensure more consistency in students' personal and social development, especially with respect to their behaviour, punctuality and responsibility;
- Improve the assessment of learning so that students receive better feedback about how to improve and teachers match tasks to their learning needs;
- Identify students with specific learning needs, gifts and talents more effectively, and meet the needs of those groups in all phases of the school;
- Improve key aspects of leadership and management, including self-evaluation and the implementation of planned improvements, to achieve better outcomes for students.

Progress since the last inspection

- The school had not been fully successful in addressing the slower progress made by boys in English, mathematics and science, although there were some improvements in high school mathematics;
- Leaders had not been successful in further developing students' investigative, critical thinking and enquiry skills;
- The school had not improved the punctuality of students;
- Teachers had made some improvements in the quality and accuracy of their assessment of students' progress, but more remained to be done;
- The monitoring of the school's performance and improvement remained at the same level as previously.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science				
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Good	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
Partnerships with parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment in Islamic Education and in Arabic as an additional language was good at all phases. Attainment in the elementary school was acceptable in English and mathematics, and good in the other key subjects. Attainment at the middle school, apart from Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language, was acceptable. With the exception of good attainment in Islamic Education and English, attainment in the high school was acceptable in the relevant key subjects. In Islamic Education, most students showed good recitation skills, and those in the lower grades memorised verses from The Holy Qur'an particularly well. A majority of students in the elementary school whose first language was Arabic showed skills above expectations. In other phases, students' listening and speaking skills were well developed using standard Arabic, while reading and writing skills were weaker. A majority of students of Arabic as an additional language showed skills beyond expectations. In English, many girls in the high school produced written work of high quality. Most students had knowledge and skills in mathematics in line with expectations. Students' knowledge in science was better than their practical or research skills.

Progress in the key subjects was mixed, but more acceptable than good. Girls made better progress than boys in Islamic Education. In Arabic as a first and an additional language, students' writing skills were the least well developed. Most students made appropriate progress in English from Kindergarten through the middle school phase. In English through the high school phase, most students became confident speakers and writers. Children in the Kindergarten made good progress in their understanding of numbers. In the other phases most students made appropriate progress overall. A science initiative in the Kindergarten had strengthened the children's progress and these good gains were continued into the elementary school. The level of English comprehension required by the science course books limited students' progress in the middle and high school phases.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the elementary, middle and high school phases. Most students displayed positive attitudes towards their learning and tried to develop healthy lifestyles. Their relationships with teachers and each other were mutually respectful. Girls' behaviour was generally better than that of boys. Attendance was good, but morning punctuality continued to be a problem. Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness were good across the school. Children in the Kindergarten could describe features of an Islamic society. Students in the other phases were able to explain in detail significant events and celebrations in

the history of the UAE. Students in the high school phase showed good knowledge and appreciation of other cultures and societies, although this was a developing aspect in the elementary and middle school phases. The students' sense of community and environmental responsibility was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the other phases. Overall, a majority of students took responsibility for meeting their work requirements. Most students participated in projects which were arranged for them. Some groups of girls had shown initiative in setting up projects, for example an anti-plagiarism drive, but students rarely took the lead. Students showed acceptable understanding of the need for environmental sustainability. A significant minority of students did not take full care of their immediate environment.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable in the elementary school and good in all other phases. The quality of planning, including sharing learning objectives with students, was good overall but inconsistent in the elementary school. As a result, progress was often only acceptable in lessons in that phase. In the Kindergarten teachers usually arranged activities with clear learning outcomes, and lessons allowed children to make choices and become more independent. Teaching strategies were improving, and this assisted collaborative learning among students, especially in the middle and high school phases, where most teaching was good. Extension work for higher-attaining students in the middle and high school phases allowed them to make more progress. Tasks were not always well matched to the needs of students in the elementary phase. Teachers did not always deploy teaching assistants effectively to support independent or group-based learning.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable in the elementary phase and good in all other phases. Students, particularly girls, were usually engaged in their learning. Teachers promoted good interaction and discussion among students, especially in the middle and high school phases, and in girls' classes, in particular. The use of plenary sessions at the end of most lessons was effective in ensuring that students understood what had been taught. Students were only actively engaged in research activities in a minority of lessons. Scope existed to develop more cross-curricular links between subjects in order to improve and extend the application of English literacy skills.

The assessment of learning was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the elementary, middle and high school phases. Most teachers in the Kindergarten knew the children well through observation of individuals and groups. In other phases teachers benchmarked some assessments against international standards. They provided students in some subjects with internal tests which were set for different groups of students. There were systems in place for collecting assessment data in all phases. Teachers were

beginning to use this data effectively to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and groups, and to work out the next steps in learning for them. Assessment data was not used well to match work to students' different needs in all classes. In Arabic, probing questions were used well to assess what students knew and understood but questioning was used less successfully in the English and science lessons. Self and peer assessment were underdeveloped. The assessment of progress by students with special needs was acceptable across all phases.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was good at all phases. It had a clear rationale, breadth and balance, and planned progression. It offered some limited course choices. Most students were well prepared to undertake the transition to the next phase of learning. The curriculum was reviewed annually and was revised to reflect US common core standards and students' personal development. Although it met the needs of most students, the curriculum did not provide sufficient opportunities for higher-attaining students or the gifted and talented students. The curriculum in the 'Easy Learning' section provided a good academic programme for students with special educational needs. It was not available to students beyond Grade 5, except for remedial services offered in the resource room for Grade 6. The science and business curriculum streams prepared high school students for university or the world of work. A range of extra-curricular activities and community links enhanced the curriculum and extended learning opportunities for students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were good at all phases. Procedures to ensure the safe and speedy evacuation of the building in an emergency situation were sound and well practiced. Transport arrangements were good. The school recognized the hazards associated with children and adults moving in close proximity to the school buses, and these situations were well supervised. The classrooms and shared areas were spacious and well maintained. Toilets and washing facilities were clean and hygienic. The school's medical staff dealt with health issues efficiently; medicines and students' personal records were kept secure. Child protection measures were thoroughly and clearly understood by staff members, but no written policy was in the staff handbook.

The quality of support for students was good in the elementary phase and acceptable in the other phases. Most teachers knew their students well and provided continuity of support for their social and emotional

needs. This care was extended by counsellors and supervisors who provided more support and guidance. The quality of support for their academic needs, however, was inconsistent, with better support in the Kindergarten and elementary phases than in the middle and high school phases. Relationships were positive and supported a productive learning environment. Nevertheless, there were isolated incidences of poor management of students' behaviour. The school's improved management of students' absence had resulted in good attendance, although several families still arrived late to school at the start of the day. Effective, regular communication was maintained with parents about the students' well-being and progress.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school had effective procedures up to Grade 5 for the identification of students with significant needs. Students' needs in the 'Easy Learners' section were well understood by the majority of teachers, and specialist support was effective. Elsewhere in the school, the identification of students with additional learning needs was significantly under-developed. Gifted and talented students or older students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, had not been identified clearly. These students received adequate support in a majority of lessons, but in a significant number of other lessons, their needs were not met. In too many regular lessons, the tasks and activities did not match the needs of all learners, especially those achieving at lower or higher levels, and so their progress was slowed.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was of acceptable quality. The Principal had a clear vision for the school and disseminated it well. Most leaders at middle management levels fulfilled their responsibilities and supported the Principal well. Some teachers newly appointed to posts of responsibility had made a promising start to improving their areas. The Principal did not have sufficient support at the senior level on educational matters. Partly as a result, the school's capacity to improve had not increased, and some outcomes for students had decreased.

The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning was acceptable. The school used a range of approaches to evaluate its work. Middle leaders regularly monitored the quality of lessons. The Principal gathered the views of teachers and parents in a range of ways. Assessment data was recorded in various

ways. The senior leaders did not analyse all of the data and information gathered in a sufficiently rigorous way. Consequently, the school's self-evaluation judgements were not fully accurate, and this hampered the staff's efforts to improve the school.

Partnership with parents and the community was acceptable. Communication was carried out effectively in a range of ways, including paper reports and helpful on-line resources. Parents were not fully involved in contributing to and enhancing the quality of learning in the school. Opportunities for students to undertake activities in the community were good, but partnership working with the community was under-developed.

Governance was acceptable. The governing body had been increased to include two parent representatives. Governors held the Principal to account and consulted with parents to elicit their views on the school. The governing body supported the school at a strategic level by advising on the improvement plans and priorities, and by addressing any shortages in resources. Their support had not been effective in helping the school to raise students' attainment levels.

The management of the school was acceptable. The teaching timetable worked well. Teachers were well qualified in their subjects and were deployed sensibly. A vacancy for a physics teacher had only recently been filled. Teaching assistants were not used to full effect in some lessons. The school premises were of good quality. However, the school had not improved the room provided for Arabic as an additional language. It continued to be too small and was used as a corridor, causing frequent interruptions to learning. The school's plans to provide tablet computers for all students had been delayed. The school had improved attendance rates, but the management of punctuality was not good.

[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	117	11%
	Last year	91	9%
Teachers	172		86%
Students	217		82%

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

Most students and teachers, but only a few parents, responded to their surveys. Most parents who responded were satisfied with the overall quality of education in the school. They thought that the quality of teaching and learning was good and that their children were making progress in the key subjects. Almost all reported that their children had a well-developed understanding of Islam. Parents' views on most aspects of their children's personal and social development were positive. They were broadly happy with the school's communication. Overall, teachers tended to have more positive views than parents or students. For example, almost all teachers who responded thought the school dealt well with bullying incidents. Only a majority of parents and students thought so. Most parents and teachers thought that the school was well led. A significant proportion of parents and teachers were not positive about their involvement in decision-making.

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

Copyright © 2013

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school.
It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.