

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Dubai Modern Education School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, [info@khda.gov.ae](mailto:info@khda.gov.ae), [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae)

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai Modern Education School

Location	Al Mizhar
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dmeschools.com
Telephone	04-2885115
Address	PO Box 61720, Dubai
Principal	Dr. Farouq Ghanem
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	2,475
Number of Emirati students	1,835 (74%)
Date of the inspection	Sunday 15th to Thursday 19th January 2012

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## The context of the school

Located in Al Mizhar, Dubai Modern Education School is a private school providing education from Kindergarten to Grade 12 for girls and boys, aged 3 to 18 years. The school has two sections: one follows the Ministry of Education curriculum and the other follows a US curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 2,475 students on roll. The school attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

There were 186 full and part-time teachers, excluding the Principal and senior leadership team. All teachers in the school had a university or college qualification. They were supported by 16 teaching and classroom assistants. About 74 per cent of the students were Emirati. Thirty seven different nationalities were represented among the student population. At the time of the inspection, the Principal was in his 14th year. Approximately 47 teachers or 25 per cent had been in the school for less than one year.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

## How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Dubai Modern Education School provided an acceptable education for its students. It had a few strengths which included the students' understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture in all phases of the school. Attainment in science in Kindergarten was acceptable and progress was good. Attainment and progress in science was unsatisfactory at all other phases. The quality of teaching for effective learning and the quality of students' learning were unsatisfactory in the elementary phase but acceptable elsewhere. In Kindergarten, assessment was acceptable but unsatisfactory in all other phases. The curriculum quality, health and safety and the quality of support were all good in Kindergarten but acceptable at all other phases. Leadership, partnerships with parents, governance and staffing, facilities and resources were also of an acceptable quality. Self-evaluation and improvement planning was unsatisfactory.

The school had made very little progress towards addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Leadership had not been delegated and action plans for improvement were not focused on a realistic analysis of the school's work. The school had yet to develop a common understanding of

what constituted good and outstanding teaching and learning which would help to improve student attainment and progress. Nevertheless, the school displayed a capacity to improve further.

## Key strengths

- Students' good understanding of Islam and their culture and heritage;
- The educational provision for children in the Kindergarten;
- Support for the students and school from the parent body;
- Commitment of middle managers to develop and enhance their subjects;
- The administrative support of the school.

## Recommendations

In order to raise students' attainment and progress in all subjects, especially in science, the school should ensure that:

- it improves teaching and learning, focusing on eliminating unsatisfactory lessons;
- teachers consistently prepare and plan lessons which make use of assessment data and to set work that is equally challenging for all ability groups;
- students are encouraged to learn more for themselves through enquiry, research and investigation, as well as open-ended tasks;
- the monitoring of classroom practice by senior leaders is more accurate, rigorous and closely linked to the quality of students' learning.

Improve the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:

- leadership is fully delegated to all levels, with all senior and middle leaders having sufficient time, authority and autonomy to carry out their duties effectively;
- action plans for improvement are sharply focused with realistic and challenging aims based on detailed analyses of the school's work;
- there are arrangements for the identification, support and curriculum provision for all students with SEN;
- there is compliance with Ministry of Education (MoE) requirements with regard to Arabic for additional language learners in the school.

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

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

Attainment across the phases ranged from acceptable to good in all key subjects, except in science where it was unsatisfactory across three phases. In Islamic Education, most students were able to identify the events of Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) biography and those of his close relatives; however few could analyse the impact of these events. In Arabic, students' writing skills required considerable development and improvement. In English, students developed their ability to read and analyse a range of texts at an appropriate level. By high school most students were confident speakers, but writing was weaker for many students and overall, girls performed significantly better than boys. In mathematics, students showed acceptable levels of skills in number and shape, space and measure. Students' scientific knowledge was mostly at a superficial level and their investigative skills, as well as their ability to apply learning to the real world, were not well-developed.

Progress across all the phases was acceptable in most key subjects, except in science where it was good in the Kindergarten but unsatisfactory in other phases of the school. Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress in lessons.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Students in Kindergarten and the lower section of the elementary school were well behaved, enthusiastic and respectful, and enjoyed coming to school. In the upper phases, there were more than a few instances where students were not respectful of their teachers. Students' basic awareness of healthy lifestyles choices was not always applied to their daily habits. Whilst attendance was good overall too many

students arrived late for school which impacted upon the quality of their learning. Almost all students, including children in Kindergarten, had a strong sense of national identity and good knowledge of the Islamic values that influenced the quality of life in Dubai. Students contributed to the life of the school through the student council and roles as class representatives. However, their responsibilities were often limited in scope and rarely impacted significantly upon their life at school. Most students had good knowledge of how Dubai had developed and credited this to its rulers' vision and wise deployment of resources. Environmental understanding was underdeveloped. Knowledge of local and global issues was limited and throughout the school students often did not maintain the cleanliness of their own immediate environment.

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

The majority of teaching promoted acceptable learning, with teachers generally secure in their subject knowledge although not all were consistent in their understanding of how students learn at various stages of their school life. Lack of appropriate planning resulted in too much directed teaching with students disengaged in activities which lacked meaning and challenge. A minority of teaching was unsatisfactory because of the very low expectations of what students could learn beyond the limited content provided by the teacher. This usually resulted in boredom and, in some cases, low-level disruption by some students. In the better lessons, teachers made appropriate provision for the full ability range and provided a range of resources to meet individual needs. Most Kindergarten teachers were clear about what children needed to learn, and they targeted pertinent questions accordingly to provide the necessary challenge.

Students' attitudes towards their learning varied considerably from those who were mature, conscientious and focused, to those who were negative and lacked motivation during lessons. Collaborative learning was



a feature of good lessons. For example, in drama when students worked together in groups, they were able to share ideas about elements of performance such as, audio-visual effects, narration and characterisation in the development of their performance. Students were rarely encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning or to pursue personal interests or independent research. An exception was in English where students prepared and delivered presentations on natural disasters which included the correct use of technical vocabulary. Enquiry and research skills were not well promoted and, in science, there were too few opportunities for students to experiment, make predictions and hypothesize.

Assessment was unsatisfactory in all parts of the school, except in Kindergarten where it was acceptable. Teachers in Kindergarten used their knowledge of children and effective questioning to judge strengths and weaknesses in attainment. However, teachers were less effective in their evaluation of progress. In other phases, internal assessment, based on examination results and quizzes, was not benchmarked externally against international standards nor used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and the quality of teaching. Arrangements to track and record progress were inconsistent. Teachers marked students' work regularly but written comments or oral feedback rarely helped students to improve their learning further.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was acceptable in all phases except in Kindergarten where it was good. Across the school the curriculum had a clear rationale and was regularly reviewed. As part of this review the school had recently introduced the separate sciences and students could now study physics, chemistry and biology. Transition arrangements at various points within the school were adequate and included visits and trips to local colleges and universities. Curriculum provision within departments was variable with some offering opportunities for students to participate in competitions. However, too much of the work in departments was tied to the text book with an emphasis on work sheets. Furthermore, the curriculum did not meet the needs of all students with limited and variable provision for students with special educational needs and gifted students. Few opportunities were provided for the development of students' independent learning and critical thinking skills. There were no extra-curricular classes but the school offered some enrichment activities including trips, visiting speakers and a range of voluntary and charity work. The school was not fully compliant with the Ministry of Education requirements in Arabic for additional language learners.

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

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

Arrangements to ensure students' health and safety were acceptable in all phases except Kindergarten, where they were good. The school site was adequately maintained and fire drills were undertaken and safety equipment correctly serviced. Students' medical needs were met by the school's permanent clinic staff. They kept detailed records of treatment and carried out regular health checks on aspects such as students' weight and diet. The school canteens provided a range of foods in accordance with Ministry guidance, but student choices were not always healthy. Kindergarten children ate a better range of snacks than older students. Some science lessons promoted awareness of the importance of healthy living, and students knew what they should be doing to stay fit and well. Bus transport was well managed, but parental pick up areas were not effectively organised and students were unnecessarily exposed to moving traffic. Child protection procedures remained informal, with no written policy.

The quality of support was good in Kindergarten and acceptable elsewhere. Most student-staff relationships were positive and students reported that they felt safe and well looked after in school. Behaviour was adequately managed and supervision ensured safe movement around school. Kindergarten children were very well supervised at all times and enjoyed a very secure environment. The school was awaiting a replacement counsellor but other staff were attempting to fulfill roles such as advice on further education placements and applications for further education. The school's provision for students with special or additional educational needs varied according to who was teaching them. There was insufficient modification of the curriculum to meet their needs. Whilst the school monitored attendance and punctuality its actions had brought about only limited overall improvement.

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

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

The leadership of the school was acceptable. The head of the school and the senior management team were well-meaning, but not sufficiently effective in bringing about the required school improvement. Middle managers were committed, demonstrated acceptable leadership, but their impact was reduced by the lack of whole school vision and direction. Middle managers had not been empowered to make the changes that were needed to develop the school further. Consequently, they did not have a significant effect upon the quality of teaching and thus students' attainment and progress were not being maximized. There was an underdeveloped awareness of how leadership impacts on teaching quality and student outcomes. The school demonstrated an acceptable capacity to improve.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. The school did not have a realistic view of its key priorities and had not made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations of the previous report. The action plan did not contain sufficient details about how improvement was to be implemented or how it would be measured. The school did not have a realistic view of the performance of its teachers or the quality of learning in lessons. Whilst senior managers carried out classroom observations these were not sufficiently rigorous and the information gained was not used effectively to inform self-evaluation or to improve teaching.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. Parents were highly supportive of the school and the leadership team. Parents felt welcomed in the school and knew they could discuss any aspect of their children's education. They felt staff were approachable and quickly resolved any issues. Parents meetings were held regularly and these, along with written reports, informed parents about their children's progress in class tests and examinations. Parents were encouraged to make suggestions as to how improvements could be made in the life of the school. Such dialogue had led to some changes being made.

The quality of governance was acceptable. The governing committee met the instructional needs of the school but did not ensure that it met the statutory requirements for teaching Arabic as an additional language. It did not hold the school accountable for its actions. The body benefited from parental and

business representation. The governors also welcomed suggestions from parents and the school community. Little impact of governance was evident in the work of the school.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. Teachers were sufficiently qualified and deployed effectively. The school was attractive, clean and well cared for. Teachers lacked the additional, independent professional development opportunities, to develop their teaching careers more fully. The outside play areas were mostly concrete and brick, with few facilities but new games accommodation was being prepared at the time of the inspection.

## 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	85	12%
	Last year	196	9%
Teachers	11		17%
Students	41		3%

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

Only a few parents responded to the survey, at a higher rate than last year. A minority of teachers and a very few senior students responded to their surveys. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire reported a high degree of satisfaction with the leadership of the school and the quality of education their children were receiving. They felt the school kept their children safe and most felt their children were happy in their learning and were making good progress. Approximately half did not know the school's arrangements for supporting children with additional learning needs. Just under half felt that the school did not give their child enough support in choosing their future career and that the range of subject options was too narrow. Only a few staff responded to the questionnaire and felt they would benefit from more staff training. Students who responded wanted more after school activities and out of school trips.

## 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)

## Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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