

# INSPECTION REPORT

## United International Private School

Report published in April 2013

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT United International Private School

|                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Location                              | Al Muhaisnah 4                  |
| Type of school                        | Private                         |
| Website                               | www.uips.ae                     |
| Telephone                             | 04-254-3888                     |
| Address                               | Muhaisnah 4 PO Box 60817        |
| Principal                             | Dr. Eunice Orzame               |
| Curriculum                            | Philippine                      |
| Gender of students                    | Boys and Girls                  |
| Age / Grades or Year Groups           | 4-16 / Kindergarten to Grade 10 |
| Attendance                            | Good                            |
| Number of students on roll            | 1,709                           |
| Largest nationality group of Students | Philippine                      |
| Number of Emirati students            | 0                               |
| Date of the inspection                | 25th to 28th February 2013      |

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## The context of the school

Located in Muhaisinah 4, the United International Private School served a student population of 1,709, almost all from The Philippines. Enrolment had increased by about 150 students since the previous inspection; consequently the school was operating at full capacity. There were no Emirati students at the school. At the time of inspection, the school had identified 19 students with a special education need and a further 109 students as attaining below the expectations of the curriculum.

The school offered a curriculum that was compliant with the requirements of the Department of Education in The Philippines, as well as the Ministry of Education in the UAE. Students in Grades 6 and 8 wrote examinations set in the home country and Grade 10 students wrote university examinations set by the respective universities there. The school was organised into three phases, including a two-year Kindergarten, an elementary phase comprised of Grades 1 to 6 and a secondary phase of Grades 7 to 10 that resulted in the Philippine Diploma.

The school had 77 teachers on the staff, almost all of whom were qualified. The rate of turnover was very low, at less than five per cent annually. The Principal was in her first full year at the school and was supported by three Assistant Principals, a Head of Guidance and several co-ordinators. Teachers in the Kindergarten were supported by classroom assistants.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

### Key strengths

- Students' good attainment and progress in most key subjects in the secondary grades;
- Students' good attainment and progress in learning the Filipino language in all three phases;
- Students' outstanding attitudes and behaviour, and good overall social development;
- The good teaching and learning in the secondary grades;
- The good overall provision for the health and safety of students.

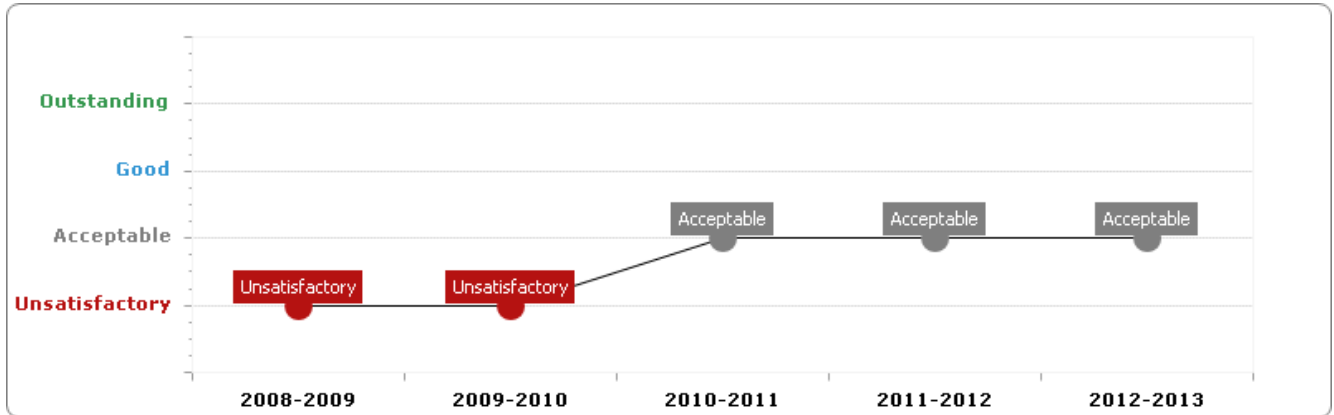
### Recommendations

- Raise students' attainment to good levels in all key subjects;
- Continue to improve teaching and learning until they are consistently good in all three phases;
- Further develop the use of assessment information so that teaching is planned to match students' next steps in learning;
- Improve the procedures for the identification and support of students with special educational needs;
- Use self-evaluation processes to accurately identify the school's strengths and the aspects of provision that need further improvement.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Students' progress in Islamic Education improved to good in both phases;
- Children's progress in English improved to good in the Kindergarten;
- Students' progress in science improved to good in the secondary phase;
- The quality of teaching and learning improved to good in the secondary phase;
- The quality of overall leadership had improved to good.

## Trend of overall performance



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

|   | Kindergarten   | Primary        | High           |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Islamic Education</b>                |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Good           | Good           |
| <b>Arabic as a first language</b>       |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable |
| <b>Arabic as an additional language</b> |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Not Applicable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| Progress                                | Not Applicable | Acceptable     | Acceptable     |
| <b>Filipino</b>                         |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Good           | Good           | Good           |
| Progress                                | Good           | Good           | Good           |
| <b>English</b>                          |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Good           |
| Progress                                | Good           | Good           | Good           |
| <b>Mathematics</b>                      |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Good           |
| Progress                                | Acceptable     | Good           | Good           |
| <b>Science</b>                          |                |                |                |
| Attainment                              | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Good           |
| Progress                                | Acceptable     | Acceptable     | Good           |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

|  | Kindergarten | Primary     | High        |
|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Attitudes and behaviour  | Outstanding  | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness | Good         | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Community and environmental responsibility                               | Good         | Good        | Outstanding |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

|                                 | Kindergarten | Primary    | High       |
|---------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable   | Acceptable | Good       |
| Quality of students' learning   | Acceptable   | Acceptable | Good       |
| Assessment                      | Acceptable   | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)



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

|                    | Kindergarten | Primary    | High       |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum quality | Acceptable   | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

|                    | Kindergarten | Primary    | High       |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| Health and Safety  | Good         | Good       | Good       |
| Quality of Support | Acceptable   | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment in the six key subjects was mixed, but strongest in learning the Filipino language. Most Muslim students were able to explain the Five Pillars of Islam and the steps required to perform the group prayers well. They had clear understanding of Islamic etiquette, values and morals. Their Holy Qur'an recitation skills were still developing. In Arabic as an additional language, most students were able to understand and respond to the familiar greetings. They were able to conduct simple conversations about their daily lives. Reading unfamiliar sentences was challenging for a majority of students and their writing skills were the weakest. In English, attainment was acceptable in both the Kindergarten and elementary phases, but it was good in the secondary grades. Children from the Kindergarten onwards listened carefully and they talked with increasing confidence as they progressed through the grades. Most students read English texts with accuracy. Secondary students were highly skilled in debating and public speaking. Some elements of the writing process were underdeveloped in the elementary grades. Overall, girls performed significantly better than boys in English assessments. In Filipino, the attainment of a majority of students was above the expectations of the curriculum in all three phases. In mathematics, most Kindergarten children were confident using basic numbers and shapes. In other phases, numerical and practical skills, algebraic manipulation and the application of mathematics to real-life problems were well developed. Students' mental mathematics and critical thinking skills were underdeveloped. In science, knowledge was secure throughout the school, but children in the Kindergarten were not skilled at investigating. Students in the primary grades lacked confidence predicting outcomes or explaining their reasoning. In the secondary grades, students demonstrated higher order thinking skills by applying their knowledge and solving science problems found in real life.

Students' progress in the key subjects was mixed, but it was stronger in Filipino and in the secondary grades generally. Progress in Islamic Education was good overall but inadequate in developing recitation skills of The Holy Qur'an. In Arabic as an additional language, there was acceptable progress in the pronunciation of familiar words and phrases. Progress in learning grammar was in line with expectations for an additional language. Progress in developing writing skills was slower. In English, progress was good in both the Kindergarten and secondary phases. Poor planning in the elementary phase resulted in students making insufficient progress in their writing skills. In Filipino, children made strong progress after entry to the school in Kindergarten 1 and their progress continued to be good throughout Grades 1 to 10. Many children brought different dialects to their classes, yet made good progress in learning formal Filipino. Students' progress in mathematics was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in both the elementary and secondary phases. Particularly in the Kindergarten and elementary phases, practical activities and real-life problems helped students develop their understanding. Progress generally increased as students moved through the school and it was best in Grade 10, when students were engaged in very

challenging mathematical tasks. Students' involvement in practical science activities had a positive impact on their progress, particularly in the secondary school. In the elementary grades, progress was acceptable because some teachers did not plan group work to ensure that the activities engaged all students. In the secondary grades progress was good when teachers acted as facilitators and students had to think carefully, solve problems and justify their answers.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school succeeded in achieving its stated mission of fostering students' holistic development, with respect for human values. Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding in all phases. They had very positive and productive relations with their teachers and each other. They were almost always enthusiastic learners and co-operated very well during recess times and during morning assemblies. Almost all students ate healthy lunches, whether brought from home or purchased in the school canteen. They were punctual in arriving at school and moving to lessons at all times. Students demonstrated very good understanding of Islamic values and appreciated the relevance and impact of those values on daily life here in Dubai. They actively participated in different events aimed at promoting appreciation for Islam. Students displayed strong understanding of the UAE's culture. For example, they could sing the national anthem in Arabic and Muslim students could recite passages from The Holy Qur'an. Additionally, students fully appreciated and celebrated the Filipino culture and were aware of the common elements between cultures. Students' community and environmental awareness and action were good, and outstanding in the secondary grades. Students took part in service clubs and held posts of responsibility within the school. Significant numbers of older students took leadership roles in the morning assemblies. They also raised funds for less fortunate people in Dubai and in The Philippines. They took good care of the school grounds and participated in environmental projects outside the school as well.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of teaching was good in the secondary phase and acceptable in the others. Teachers were well qualified and had strong subject knowledge. They shared mutually respectful relationships with students. Shared planning duties and professional development helped teachers plan their lessons effectively. In the early grades of the primary phase, teachers' expectations were sometimes not high enough and so the pace of work was too slow. In the other grades, teachers used time well to get the most out of each period. Arabic lessons were not appropriately matched to meet the needs of students for whom Arabic

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي  
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was a third language. Most teachers in the secondary grades used a range of learning activities, such as group and paired work, to enhance learning and enjoyment. Different tasks for different learning styles were mentioned in teachers' lesson plans but not consistently observed in action. Most teachers supplemented textbooks with practical activities and worksheets but, in elementary lessons, tasks were often unrelated to students' lives. A majority of teachers used questions well to promote thinking by their students. A minority of teachers made good use of plenary sessions at the end of lessons to review learning and provide additional teaching if necessary. This was particularly well done in Islamic Education lessons.

The quality of students' learning was good in the secondary grades and acceptable in the others. In most lessons, students were attentive and worked hard. At all phases they collaborated very well on group-tasks when given the opportunity and when the purpose of group tasks was made clear. When the pace of teaching was slow, students were passive and uninvolved. There was too little development of independent research or enquiry skills, partly due to the limited access to information and communications technology in lessons. Students in Islamic Education and mathematics, and in all subjects in the secondary grades, were able to make connections between what was being learned and their daily lives. Teachers frequently shared the objectives of lessons with students, but some did not involve students in reviewing what had been learned. Critical thinking skills were developing well in English and Filipino, but not throughout the other subjects. In science and mathematics lessons, some teachers did not allow sufficient time for students to find results and think carefully about the strategies they could use to solve problems.

The assessment of learning was acceptable across all three phases. Almost all teachers knew their students' strengths and weaknesses well. Many were skilled at assessing learning as it happened but, for a few teachers, this skill was weak. Teachers used the school's comprehensive assessment systems to monitor and track the achievements of students. Class quizzes, topic tests, examinations and term reports to parents provided helpful information on students' progress. However, not all teachers made sufficient use of the available assessment information. Some teachers did not plan activities and resources to match their individual students' needs. Teachers of secondary English and Filipino in all grades provided effective support and timely feedback to their students. However, across the other subjects, feedback to students was too varied in quality. Marking of written work was not informative enough in some subjects. There were too few comments in students' exercise books to help them improve their work or plan the next steps in learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable at all phases. It was soundly planned and generally broad and balanced across subjects to meet the needs of most students. There was a recent curriculum review and procedures had been put in place to ensure adequate provision of all subjects for most groups of students. The timetable for some subjects across all phases was poorly distributed. For example, some students were taught the same subject three times in one day. There was limited choice in learning for almost all students. Low levels of challenge for some students were observed and the support to the group of students with special educational needs was just beginning. While there was sufficient challenge for most students inside the classrooms, opportunities for self-directed learning and research remained inconsistent in all phases. Except for Arabic, the curriculum provided a range of extra-curricular activities and community links that had positive effects upon learning. The curriculum was enriched by means of special projects and events throughout the school year that were integrated with topics of study.

[View judgements](#)

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

The health and safety provision across the school was good. Supervision, training, drills, maintenance procedures and other arrangements ensured a healthy and safe environment. Senior students contributed to this by their effective supervision as first aid 'medics.' Care and supervision on buses were good, but a few students were observed not wearing seat belts. The ground floor had sufficient ramps, but there was no lift in any school building and no other specialist facilities for students with physical disabilities. Medical and accident records were up-to-date and showed a decline in minor accidents. The school also promoted healthy diets and lifestyles through an effective programme of health education and daily exercise. Welfare and care included good supervision at all times throughout the school day. A few students lacked proper awareness of vehicle traffic near the school when they walked home. The basketball court remained uncovered, meaning it still could not be used safely in the hot months.

The school's claim that it was 'a second home for students' was reflected in the high quality of care and respect shown by teachers to their students. The school provided a supportive environment for learning and growing. Students' behaviour was very effectively managed across all phases of the school. The guidance counsellor worked closely with teachers, students and parents to support students' well-being. She provided valuable guidance to older students on their choices of colleges and universities. There were effective systems in place to promote good attendance and outstanding punctuality.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school was at a very early stage of identifying students with special educational needs and the school's admissions policy was not wholly inclusive. The school ensured that there were no barriers to learning for students with medical conditions. Teachers knew their students well but some were not skilled in identifying or supporting individual needs. Provision for the gifted and talented students was at an early stage of development.

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

The quality of leadership was good overall. Most, but not all leaders shared a clear vision of the school's future and worked in effective teams to realise it. All leaders were committed to the school and had accurate understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Since the previous inspection, leaders had achieved significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the progress of students in the secondary grades. Most subject leaders demonstrated good understanding of their students' results according to the most recent data available.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Documents showed that while the leaders had engaged many staff members in evaluation and improvement planning, the evaluations were often too generous. This meant that not all areas for improvement were identified accurately. The school's long-range plans were detailed and addressed the leaders' vision for better facilities, improved teaching and the forthcoming Philippine curriculum expansion. Teachers' performance was monitored regularly, targets for improvement were set and good teaching was modelled. Training for all teachers reflected the school's improvement priorities. The school's action plans were detailed and addressed the recommendations from the previous inspection report thoroughly. There was evident progress on most, but not all of those recommendations.

The school's links with parents and the local and international community were good. Parents were part of regular two-way communication by several means. They were often present in the school for special events and Philippine community events that included parents from other schools. The school had formal links with other schools for academics and sports. There were also important links with agencies abroad to connect the school to the home country. Reports to parents were regular and informative, as were meetings between teachers and parents. Reports cards did not include next steps in learning, but these

were communicated in other ways, including journals that circulated between students' homes and the school.

The governance of the school was acceptable. The school's owners had established a small board to provide objective views about the school's performance, but it did not include representation from all stakeholders. Governors did not meet frequently enough and consequently they did not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths or the priorities for improvement. Lacking such understanding, the influence of the board upon the school was limited.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The school ran smoothly with effective systems for internal communication. Almost all teachers were qualified, well deployed and had teaching certificates and turnover was very low. However, there were only five teaching assistants and they were deployed only in the Kindergarten. Classroom capacity had been reached. There was some overcrowding at times in the Kindergarten playground, the home economics room and the science laboratory. The one library, a small clinic and single science laboratory were insufficient to meet the needs of the school's population. The sports areas and surfaces were not appropriate for the uses to which they were put. The school provided information technology equipment in almost all of the classrooms but it was not sufficiently used to support teaching and learning.

[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 | 582 | 40%        |
|                          | Last year | 177 | 18%        |
| Teachers                 | 55        |     | 71%        |
| Students                 | 97        |     | 94%        |

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

A significant minority of parents responded to their survey, almost three times as many as last year. Almost all parents expressed satisfaction with the overall quality of education provided by the school. Almost all agreed that their children's progress was good in the six key subjects, but a few disagreed that progress was good in learning Arabic as an additional language. Parents held very positive views on all aspects of provision, but a few disagreed that their children could choose subjects, topics or activities to learn. Over two-thirds of the teachers responded to their survey. They held very positive views about the school and its students, but a few indicated that the school's leaders did not listen to their opinions about the school. All teachers reported that inspection had led to improvements at the school and that the last inspection report was accurate. Almost all senior students responded to their survey. Like their parents, they indicated that progress was good in the key subjects but less so in Arabic. Across the range of school provision students expressed very positive views but, like their teachers, a minority believed that school leaders did not listen to their opinions or involve them 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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