

INSPECTION REPORT

Towheed Iranian School for Girls

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Towheed Iranian School for Girls

Location	Al Karama
Type of school	Private
Website	www.Gi-st.com
Telephone	04-3961234
Address	Dubai Al Karama-P.O.BOX:17
Principal	Soraya Norollah Komijani, Banafsheh Seyed Abdolraso
Curriculum	Iranian
Gender of students	Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	6-18 / Grade 1 to Grade 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	380
Largest nationality group of Students	Iranian
Number of Emirati students	0 (%)
Date of the inspection	12 th November to 14 th November 2012

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 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

Towheed Iranian Girls School is situated in Al Karama. The school opened in 1971. At the time of the inspection there were 380 students on roll, aged six to 18 years.

The school followed an Iranian curriculum. All students were of Iranian nationality. Students took Iranian national examinations at the end of Grades 5, 8, and 12.

There were 39 teachers, including the new principal and a senior leadership team. Most teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. Students were grouped in 22 classes. There were five classes in primary from Grades 1 to 5, six in middle school from Grades 6 to 8 and nine in high school classes from Grades 9 to 12. At the time of the inspection, four teachers were newly appointed, all in the science department.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The good level of attainment and progress in science across the phases and in mathematics in the high school;
- Students' self-discipline and confidence leading to a readiness to learn;
- The good use of homework to promote independent learning.

Recommendations

- Continue to raise the attainment in Arabic and English in primary so that the four language skills are fully developed;
- Expand the range of teaching approaches and resources to secure active and meaningful learning;
- Ensure that assessment strategies are used effectively to inform next steps in learning for all students;
- Ensure the curriculum for Islamic Education and the number of hours in Arabic in primary and middle school meet the UAE Ministry of Education requirements;
- Improve the progress of special educational students by sharpening their identification and implementing individual learning plans;
- Introduce systematic self-evaluation processes at all levels to secure improvement across the school.

Progress since the last inspection

- Students' attainment and progress in most of the grades had been maintained since the last inspection;
- There were more rigorous systems in place for securing safety and healthy living around school.

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Primary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	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	Unsatisfactory
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?

Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was unsatisfactory in primary but acceptable at the other phases. Most students in middle and secondary phases understood grammar rules clearly. However, a significant number of students could not use Arabic confidently in their daily life. In English, students' attainment was acceptable across all three phases. It was stronger in speaking across the school, particularly in the middle and higher phases. Attainment in writing was weaker in all phases. Students did not regularly write at length for different purposes. Attainment in mathematics in the primary and middle school was acceptable and good in the high school. Students gained more knowledge and understanding as they moved into the middle and high school. Examination results were stronger in the middle and high school. Attainment in science was good across the school. In all phases students carried out research at home and in groups prepared informed presentations. In chemistry and physics they investigated through experiments and could analyse their findings.

Progress in Arabic as an additional language was unsatisfactory in primary and acceptable in other phases. Progress in grammar was better than other skills in the middle and secondary phases. Students' progress was inhibited by the limited amount of time allocated for the teaching of Arabic as an additional language, especially in primary. Students' progress in English was acceptable in all phases, although spoken English was stronger in the middle and high school. In writing, progress was inhibited by an over-reliance on workbooks. Students' progress in mathematics was better in the primary and high school phases. In science, progress was good across all phases due to the better quality of teaching in that subject.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding across the school. Students' took their learning seriously and displayed a considerable degree of responsibility for their own learning from an early age. They showed confidence, mutual respect and when the opportunity presented itself they worked well collaboratively and independently. Healthy living was promoted well in the school and the students had a strong commitment to maintain their well-being. Attendance levels were good. Most students arrived for lessons on time and took their learning very seriously.

Students' understanding of Islamic values and their awareness of cultures were good across the school. They had a clear view of and celebrated different cultures and how these influenced contemporary society. Most students understood about how Islamic values influenced their lives. Their appreciation of Iranian heritage was extremely well developed. However, students' appreciation of heritage and values in the UAE was basic.

Students' sense of community and environmental awareness was good. Regular meetings with the Principal influenced aspects of the school life. Their contribution within their national group was good but less developed outside their local community. Students had responsible attitudes as members of the school community, acting as 'expert learners' by researching and presenting ideas. Students were aware of environmental factors in the UAE and climate change issues worldwide. They contributed to keeping the school tidy, but did not participate in more focused environmental initiatives.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable across the school. Most teachers had a good knowledge of their subject and created a positive learning environment where students felt respected and able to learn. There were few written plans for lessons although most lessons had a clear structure. Resources, including, information and communications technology were generally too limited to support learning well across the school. In English and mathematics, there was an over-reliance on textbooks. However, good questioning and dialogue ensured students' eager participation in lessons. Interactions between teachers and students were particularly good in the high school where class numbers were small. The quality of questioning was outstanding in science in both primary and high schools. Across the school there was insufficient adaptation of teaching methods to meet the needs of all. Students with additional learning needs were not appropriately identified and planned for. However, the challenge in lessons for older students was more successful in meeting the needs of more-able students. Teaching to promote critical thinking and independent learning was yet to be fully developed in the school.

Students' enjoyed their learning and were fully engaged in their lessons. Overall the quality of learning was acceptable in all phases of the school. Older students showed responsibility for their learning in the mature way they undertook research homework. However, students rarely evaluated their own strengths and weaknesses in learning and did not clearly know how to improve their work. This was because assessment and feedback was insufficient in lessons. Students' interaction with each other, and with their teachers, was a strong aspect of most lessons. They were very willing and confident to talk about their learning. In the best lessons, teachers were facilitators of productive two-way conversations. Collaboration was strongest in science where most students were able to make connections with other learning and with life experiences. Critical thinking skills were a more common feature of learning too, in this subject. A few students also made good use of their own information and communications technology resources to support their learning in science.

The quality of assessment was acceptable across the school. The school gathered external data from the Iranian examinations board and was able to compare it with overall group performance. Continuous assessment was used to inform final grades in some key subjects. However, the school did not use the data to monitor students' achievements or to systematically track progress. Students were not regularly involved in assessing their own learning. Although most teachers knew their students well, the quality and effectiveness of oral and written feedback to students for improvement was variable. Assessment information was also not used enough by teachers to plan to meet the learning needs of all students, particularly those with learning difficulties.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable. It was based on the school's ethos and values but did not comply with the Ministry of Education requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic. There was a balance over time on subjects which related to basic skills and those which promoted artistic and sporting pursuits. In some instances, the curriculum was overly dominated by text books. Lessons were planned to build on previous curriculum content and students were prepared for their next stage in education. The strong emphasis on students' personal development within the curriculum also meant most students developed confidence quickly. However, the curriculum was not subject to any systematic revision or review nor was it modified for students with educational needs which hindered their overall progress. There was limited opportunities for using technology. A good number of community links were provided by the parents from business, medical and artistic backgrounds which also provided career guidance to the students at the appropriate time. A minority of enrichment activities were available through the Iranian club.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Acceptable arrangements were in place to ensure the health and well-being of students. The school had made good progress in addressing the concerns of the last report. The use of seat belts on buses was now common practice. The school had arranged for regular fire evacuation drills and the nutritional value of food, sold in the school canteen, had improved. The school nurse now had a leading role in promoting health, safety and child protection. She carried out regular health and safety checks and kept clear records of issues.

The support given to students was also of an acceptable quality, overall. Relationships between students and staff and students and their peers were positive. The school had a very caring ethos and high expectations for the students. Interactions were mutually respectful and friendly which led to lessons being interactive. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality by the administrative staff was good. The well-being and personal development of the students was promoted and monitored by the school counsellor who also offered careers advice to students in the school.

[View judgements](#)

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

Provision for students with special educational needs required improvement. Students with special needs were admitted to the school and a screening test was completed in Grade 1. There were, however, no facilities to enable wheelchair users to attend the school. The progress of students who were gifted and talented was better, as the school had high expectations of students. These students were encouraged to take part in competitions. The school had small classes and students with special needs were often supported to an acceptable level by the teacher and their peers. However, the school's identification process was not sufficiently diagnostic to be fully accurate and not all students who had special needs had been identified.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The leaders were dedicated and promoted the vision for education from the Iranian Ministry of Education. Responsibilities were effectively distributed amongst the school leaders. However, communication was not always clear, impeding the school improvement process. The new principal and her team had started to address some recommendations from the previous report. However, strategies had yet to be fully effective. For example, the school continued to be non-compliant with the UAE Ministry of Education subject requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. Leaders did not always have a focused and realistic view on what to improve and what strategies to implement to make such adjustments to the school. Improvement plans were underdeveloped and not closely monitored. This also included the evaluation of teaching and learning which was sporadic and did not inform any clear professional development plan. Furthermore, the evaluation of students' work did not lead to systematic plans for support and improvement.

Partnerships with parents and the local and wider community were good. Parents were regularly informed about both the academic and personal development of their children and they were very positive about the quality of education provided by the school. They felt able to raise concerns such as the changes in the national curriculum for English and how the school addressed it. Most parents considered that management of the school was approachable and encouraged them to play an active part in the school life. Some links with local businesses and the community were in place. For example, parents shared their professional experience with the students in school. However, this aspect needed to be further developed, including links outside the Iranian community.

Governance in school was acceptable. The board of governors supported the leadership team, shared the same vision for improvement and were aware of the challenges in the school. They sought the views of the parents through their Parents Teachers Association. However, their strategy lacked direction and they had not supported or held the school accountable in meeting recommendations from the previous inspection.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. Teachers were appropriately qualified and their number was proportionate to the number of students in the school. However, there was not a full time special needs co-ordinator in school or teaching assistants to support students with specific educational needs. Resources for science, including the laboratory were well equipped and used effectively to develop students' research and critical skills. However, modern technologies to enhance students learning were insufficient to meet student needs in the school.

[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	24	4%
	Last year	63	11%
Teachers	8		23%
Students	39		28%

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

There was a decrease in the number of parents responding to the survey this year but more students took part. All agreed that the school provided a good education overall but their views diverged in some aspects. Almost all students and parents agreed that the progress in key subjects was good but a minority of the same population believed progress was not good in Arabic as an additional language. Both parents and students were extremely positive about the behaviour in school, but a minority of students did not enjoy school. All parties were extremely positive about the students' understanding of Islam and its values. Although most felt teaching and learning were good in school, a minority of students felt the curriculum choice was limited. Parents voiced some concerns about the transition to the new Iranian national curriculum for English as they believed not all students were ready for the transition.

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.