

INSPECTION REPORT

Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Islamic Institute

Report published in April 2014

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Islamic Institute

Location	Academic City
Type of school	Private
Website	www.rid.ae
Telephone	04 3688532
Address	P O Box 74544, Dubai
Principal	أ. د. أحمد محمد نور سيف المهيري
Curriculum	MoE
Gender of students	Boys
Age / Grades or Year Groups	12-18 / Grade 6-Grade 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	143
Largest nationality group of students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	143 (100%)
Date of the inspection	24th to 26th February 2014

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The context of the school

Sheik Rashid Bin Saeed Islamic Institute delivered the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum alongside an extensive programme in Arabic and Islamic Education which the school had developed. As a result, the school day was longer than in most schools and optional additional classes were also provided on Saturdays. The school attracted students from a wide area which included a number of Emirates. The school is located in Academic City. There were 143 male students in Grades 6 to 12. All students in all grades took the Ministry of Education tests in all subjects except Arabic and Islamic Education and students in Grade 7 and Grade 9 took the Ministry approved national tests (NAP). Students in Grade 12 took the CEPA test. The students were taught in two cycles of education; MoE curriculum Cycles 2 and 3. The school had identified a large number of its students as either gifted or talented, mostly in relation to their abilities in Islamic study and Arabic. A good level of knowledge and ability in these subjects were a pre-requisite of entry to the school. The school identified a small number of students with special educational needs (SEN).

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- Islamic values permeated the life of the school and informed the actions of staff and students.
- There was consistently good attainment and progress in most key subjects including Arabic and Islamic Education and in all key subjects in Cycle 3.
- There was good teaching across much of the school which stimulated students' active involvement in learning.
- There was a consistency of vision for school improvement which was supported by very good teamwork.
- The school was a learning community for all involved and the students believed they stood out in the UAE because of their good knowledge of Arabic and their understanding of Islamic faith.

Recommendations

- Use the information from the school's self-evaluation processes to identify the key priorities for a longer term action plan.
- Identify the most effective teaching from within the school and take steps to ensure all teaching reaches this standard.
- Ensure teachers provide specific and effective written guidance to students on how to improve their learning.
- Involve students more in assessing their own work and that of their peers so that they have a better understanding of how to improve their learning.

Progress since the last inspection

- The school leaders had created an effective extended leadership group to lead committees which had undertaken a detailed and mostly accurate analysis of the quality of the school.
- The school had developed an effective annual plan for improvement and had met many of the targets.
- The quality of teaching had improved and students actively participated in lessons.
- The quality of the curriculum had improved.
- Progress in English had improved.

Trend of overall performance



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

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Islamic Education		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good
Mathematics		
Attainment	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good
Science		
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good

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	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Quality of students' learning skills	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Personal responsibility	Good	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Curriculum quality	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Health and Safety	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Good
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language was good. Most students had well-developed Quran recitation skills. They had a strong knowledge of Islamic practice. Their knowledge and understanding of the stories of the Prophets was good, and they were well aware of the reasons behind major Seerah events and Islamic teachings. In Arabic in the lower grades, students showed good reading comprehension skills and a rich vocabulary. They were well aware of grammar rules and elements of aesthetic language such as the use of simile. In higher grades, students used vocabulary effectively in speaking and writing and could read poems expressively. Attainment in English was good across the school. The students developed their reading skills through the study of suitable and manageable texts and, by Cycle 3, many could write at some length with clarity and accuracy. Most learned to understand spoken English well but some were hesitant when asked to engage in conversation. In mathematics, attainment was acceptable in Cycle 2 and good in Cycle 3. Students were quite strong in procedural mathematics in both cycles. Their scores in school examinations were above expectations. A good percentage of students in grade 12 received distinction in the national exam. Mental arithmetic and reasoning skills were not as good as they could be, in Cycle 2 in particular. Attainment in science in both phases was good. Students across all years had good knowledge and older students could use their understanding to relate science to real world situations, for example applying understanding of image formation to the use of mirrors and lenses.

Progress was good in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language. Most students made good progress in reciting and memorising new verses from Holy Quran and in understanding details of prayers and fasting. They made good gains in learning major Seerah events and in understanding the method of arguing and proving with evidence. In Arabic, students made good progress in the skills of understanding texts, finding meanings of new words and writing meaningful sentences. They made good progress in analysing poems and learnt how to apply grammar and rhetoric rules to better understand the verses. Progress in English was good because the teachers devised interesting and engaging lessons and the student were actively involved. As a result, the students could practise and improve during the lessons and make gains in learning at a good pace. Progress in mathematics was acceptable in Cycle 2 and good in Cycle 3. Students in Cycle 3 were benefiting from more exposure to real-life applications and problem solving than those in Cycle 2 and this accelerated the pace of learning. Progress in science was good. Guided investigations in many lessons helped students develop good practical skills and understanding of enquiry. Older students had learned to identify anomalous results but had underdeveloped skills when independently planning fair tests of hypotheses.

[View judgments](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Learning was good in both phases. Most students had positive attitudes, were enthusiastic and used information and communication technology (ICT) well to support their learning. Their ability to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses and so plan to improve their own learning was underdeveloped. In a majority of lessons and especially during the outstanding activity sessions, students enthusiastically collaborated, participated fully and were confident to share their work with each other. In a minority of lessons, for example Cycle 2 mathematics, Arabic and some non-key subjects, students were not able to practise or improve their independent learning skills. Skills of critical thinking were developed when students were challenged to think deeply and to relate their studies to the real world, as in science. Cross-curricular work, such as that between English, geography and Islamic Education, stimulated students to make links between areas of knowledge and reinforced learning.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Student's personal and social development was good in Cycle 2 and outstanding in Cycle 3. Students and staff treated each other like an extended family. Senior students acted responsibly as prefects in school activities and on buses. Apart from a few students in Grade 6, they showed great respect for the school and for the Islamic values it represented. Their self-confidence was outstanding. The discipline students showed during prayer time was second to none. The level of attendance in most classes was excellent. Leading a healthy lifestyle was a common theme reflected in the students' diet and projects. Attendance was outstanding.

Students demonstrated strong Islamic values and participated in Umrah and Islamic competitions to practise what they had learned at school. They showed strong adherence to UAE culture and dress and had active roles in National Day celebrations. Students had a good understanding of Dubai's cultural diversity and used daily assembly to share information about the UAE and other countries. They visited various cultural centres and landmarks and collaborated with local and international schools.

The students had good community and environmental awareness. The student council represented all grades and participated in the organisation of sports day, congregational prayer and the monitoring of halls and buses. Students were members of 13 school clubs and participated in external competitions. They collected donations for local charities and made visits to hospitals and government agencies. Students were well

aware of environmental issues. They conserved ablution water and participated in the cleaning and planting of school grounds.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was good in both phases. Most teachers had good knowledge of their subjects, how students learned and used effective strategies to manage classes. They had high expectations and planned lessons with good pace. A range of activities ensured effective student participation and opportunities for independent learning. Students were challenged to think critically, for example, to consider the moral behind the story of the Moata battle in Islamic Education. In science, students were challenged to explain concepts to each other in small groups. In English, students debated topics arising from work in geography and Islamic Education and, in psychology, they learned techniques for problem solving. In a minority of lessons in Cycle 2, in non-key subjects such as physical education and ICT but also Arabic and mathematics, the challenge and expectation of students were insufficient and teaching was over-directed. Most teachers knew students well and planned work to effectively meet their needs. Most lessons included effective questioning targeted at individuals which probed and developed understanding and individual feedback was given to students. A minority of teachers particularly in Cycle 2 asked closed questions and gave too little time for reflection by students.

Assessment was good in both phases. Effective diagnostic testing followed by rigorous formal assessment was used to measure the attainment of students, track progress and set targets for improvement. Data was analysed, students' strengths and weaknesses identified and the information was used effectively to inform curriculum planning. Outstanding use was made of data to identify groups and individuals making insufficient progress; appropriate remedial support was then provided and evaluated. In a minority of lessons, students assessed their own or their peers' work but rarely used assessment criteria or were challenged to suggest improvements. Work was regularly marked but only a minority of teachers provided written guidance on how to improve. Consequently, students lacked understanding of the steps needed to improve to improve their learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was good across the school. The school delivered the MoE curriculum for all subjects in addition to an enriched curriculum for Arabic and Islamic Education. The curriculum team conducted regular reviews with input from parents, the advisory group and Board of Governors. The

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curriculum had smooth transitions across year groups and prepared students appropriately for next steps. The school developed its own textbooks for Arabic and Islamic Education and enriched the English curriculum with additional materials. Teachers planned cross-curricular links to integrate the subjects' content and related the curriculum to real-life examples. Bi-weekly activities by 13 associations and scheduled lectures from invited speakers enriched students' learning experiences. The school also provided students with additional lessons on Saturday mornings and planned an extensive programme of visits to various centres and agencies to reinforce curricular objectives. It prepared students for admissions into higher education by offering CEPA courses in mathematics and English.

The design of the curriculum was good. Although all students followed the same curriculum, the staff in most subjects took steps to present it in a manner which engaged students and helped them access subject-based learning. A range of support was provided to help students including differentiation of teaching, supportive group work and one-to-one support from the class teacher or other teacher. Teachers had extended their working day and attended at weekends to ensure that students had as many opportunities as possible to learn. This included additional work for students who were experiencing learning difficulties and for those who were gifted or talented. The school provided an elective options period to broaden the opportunities for study of subjects beyond the core curriculum. The school had extended careers counselling through out-of-school visits and having visiting speakers

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school had good provisions for health and safety. The school used the 'Student Safety Document' which was approved by Human Rights in Dubai for the care of its students. All school staff accepted this document as a prerequisite for employment in the school. The school environment was in excellent condition, very well maintained, clean and safe. The school had installed cameras in all key areas and in buses. The school promoted healthy lifestyle in theory and practice. A registered nurse recently started working full-time. Sports activities were provided and all students participated. The school enjoyed strong ties with the Civil Defense which conducted many awareness and training exercises on school premises. Senior staff were suitably trained to monitor possible issues and act swiftly to resolve them.

The school had a very supportive culture for all of its members; the oldest students described this as a family. In this small school, the teachers knew the students very well and they were aware of their social and emotional needs. The school gave very good support to the students and, if necessary their families, when there were emotional difficulties. There was a great respect of the staff for the students and vice versa. The school was very effective in achieving outstanding levels of attendance. Although many of the students travelled from other Emirates to attend, punctuality was outstanding. Procedures to identify students with

special educational needs were limited but effective when they were needed. The school counsellor played a critical and effective role in identifying and supporting such students. Students who experienced learning difficulties were given good support and as a result made good progress. The outstanding relationships between staff and students and between students of all ages meant that all of them had trusted peers and adults to refer to.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good. The benevolent but aspiring leadership of the school had established an ethos where all could succeed and where all staff were enabled to contribute to school improvement. The leaders had created a very effective committee structure which was successfully taking school improvement forward at a rapid but manageable pace. Regular reporting to the senior management team ensured that a clear overview was maintained and additional support could be injected to maintain progress. The school had targeted the improvement of teaching and learning as the main issue and the results of their actions were clearly visible in the classroom and in students' progress.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The senior leaders had set up a number of committees to review the school. The rationale for this was very clearly expressed and all staff were asked to contribute to the work. These committees had drawn up detailed action plans to support the improvement of the school and the principal had ensured that the developments were appropriately resourced. The committees reported regularly to senior managers. As a result, the school had made some considerable improvements, particularly in teaching and learning, and there had been significant improvements in English. The school had recently begun to develop a broader, three-year action plan based on the analysis of information including student attainment data.

The school's provision for parents and the community was good overall with some outstanding features. The school had strong ties with parents and enjoyed valued support from them. It shared regular reports with parents including SEN plans but was not yet in a position to inform them of their son's next steps in learning. The school surveyed parents and sought their input regarding any key issues. Parents had direct access to the school. An elected group of parents liaised with senior management on key issues. The school had strong links to the external community through its 'Community Links Committee'.

Governance of the school had improved and was good. There was representation from most groups of stakeholders including parents, and the governors liaised with and sought opinions from the separate and independent parents' committee. The governors were developing a good knowledge of the school. They responded to all concerns and suggestions. Some of the governors had supported the school by offering input into careers education. The governors monitored the school's improvement plan and regularly sought

updates on progress. In this way, they held the school to account for improvement but they had not developed a role as independent monitors. They had little involvement with resourcing.

Management of the school was good. The school ran well on a day-to-day basis. The staff were mostly well qualified and their roles were clear. In the last year, to improve the quality of teaching, there had been a good programme of staff training. The very good premises were maintained to a high standard and there were good resources for specialist subjects such as ICT, science and English. There was a very full timetable of lessons and activities for the students.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students were screened prior to entry because of the special nature of the school. Those students who attended the school and who had a temporary or longer term difficulty with learning were identified by the class teachers or the parents. The school then worked very hard to involve the student and their parents and set programmes to help support the student in accessing the curriculum. A very supportive ethos pervaded the school and students who needed support received it from the teachers through the arrangements they made, from the other students and the School Counsellor. Close and regular attention was paid to their progress and support was adjusted if necessary. As a result of this continuous but unobtrusive support, the students made good progress.

How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

Teachers had strong subject knowledge and planned their lessons well. They provided clear learning objectives and used them as targets during lessons. There were many opportunities for group work and the integration of other subjects such as geography in the study of texts about different types of soil. Teachers provided an appropriate range of activities and strong links to the UAE and the real world within their Arabic lessons. They engaged students with effective questions in a majority of lessons. They offered immediate oral feedback and used plenaries appropriately to check understanding. However, excessive teacher talk and closed questioning limited variation of learning and the level of challenge in a majority of Cycle 2 lessons. In good lessons, appropriate group work activities and open-ended questions helped students to analyse poems and link them to the real world. However, opportunities for practising writing techniques were not always sufficient in all phases. Use of enrichment materials was effective in motivating students and promoting critical analysis of texts in Cycle 3. Teachers provided students with many opportunities to use print and online dictionaries to search for words and to write meaningful sentences. The school followed

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MoE standards for Arabic as a first language while many teachers enriched their lessons with school-developed textbooks, reading journals and a variety of worksheets and crosswords.

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	28	21%
	Last year	44	43%
Teachers	21		84%
Students	39		100%

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

Only about a quarter of the parents responded to the survey. Almost all the parents were happy with all aspects of the school and all parents were satisfied with the quality of education. Almost all agreed that their child made good progress in Islamic Education and that they had a good understanding of Islam. Over 90 per cent of the parents thought the school was led well and that they were listened to by the school leaders. All of the eligible students responded to the survey. About 90 per cent of them were satisfied with the quality of education provided for them and they were all satisfied with the quality of Islamic Education and Arabic. A majority were satisfied with all other subjects. A few students expressed a concern about the behaviour of some other students. Almost all of the teachers completed the survey and the considered the school to be led and managed well.

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.

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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

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