

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai College

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai College

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Location | Al Sufouh |
| Type of school | Private |
| Website | www.dubaicollege.org |
| Telephone | 04-3999111 |
| Address | P.O. Box 837, Dubai |
| Principal | Mr Peter Hill |
| Curriculum | UK |
| Gender of students | Boys and Girls |
| Age / Year Groups | 11-18 / Year 7 to Year 13 |
| Attendance | Good |
| Number of students on roll | 819 |
| Largest nationality group of Students | UK |
| Number of Emirati students | 4 (less than 1%) |
| Date of the inspection | 28th to 30th January 2013 |

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The context of the school

Dubai College is situated in Al Sufouh and opened in 1978. It is a private, not-for-profit school with a selective intake policy.

The school followed the National Curriculum of England and Wales. Students were presented for GCSE examinations at the end of the secondary phase and for GCE Advanced level examinations at the end of the post-16 phase.

At the time of the inspection, there were 819 students on roll, aged from 11 to 18 years. The school was in two phases: secondary (11 to 16 years) and post-16 or sixth form (17 to 18 years). Although drawn from countries across the world, most students had United Kingdom backgrounds. Four students were Emirati. The school had identified 110 students as having some form of special educational need including those with particular gifts and talents.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Outstanding

Key strengths

- The maintenance of high attainment by students in English, mathematics and science;
- Well-established procedures that ensured outstanding support for all students and their well-being;
- Students' full engagement with the outstanding curriculum;
- Outstanding leadership that fostered high quality teaching, learning and overall improvement.

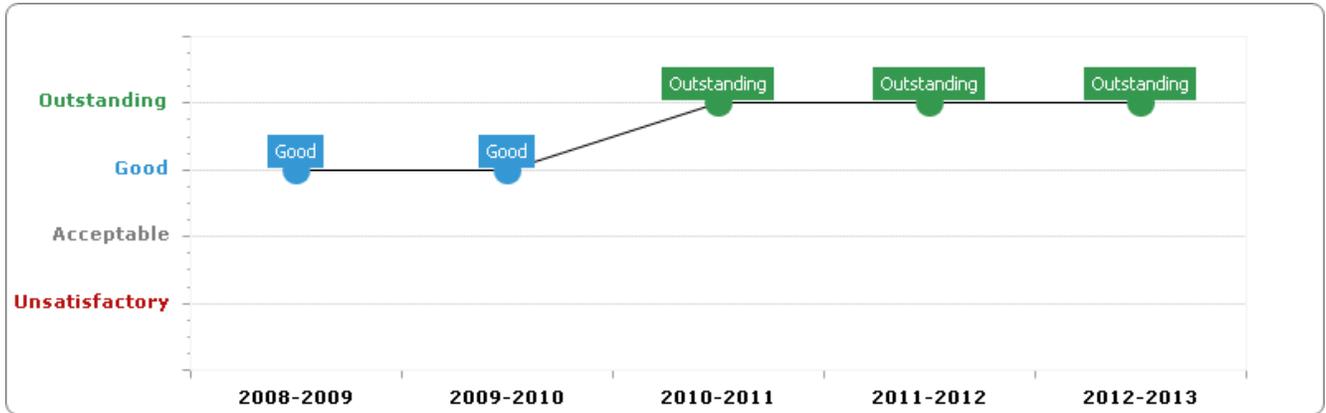
Recommendations

- Ensure that good progress in Islamic Education and Arabic leads to higher attainment;
- Continue to improve the quality of all marking of students' work so that it matches that of the best.

Progress since the last inspection

- The progress of students learning Islamic Education had improved to good;
- The school had modified the curriculum to meet students' changing needs even more precisely;
- The governors had widened the representation of stakeholders on the governing body.

Trend of overall performance



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

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Islamic Education | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Good | Good |
| Arabic as a first language | | |
| Attainment | Unsatisfactory | Not Applicable |
| Progress | Unsatisfactory | Not Applicable |
| Arabic as an additional language | | |
| Attainment | Good | Not Applicable |
| Progress | Good | Not Applicable |
| English | | |
| Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Mathematics | | |
| Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Science | | |
| Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Progress | Outstanding | Outstanding |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Attitudes and behaviour | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Community and environmental responsibility | Outstanding | Outstanding |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Quality of students' learning | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Assessment | Outstanding | Outstanding |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Curriculum quality | Outstanding | Outstanding |

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

| | Secondary | Post-16 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Health and Safety | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Quality of Support | Outstanding | Outstanding |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment in most key subjects was outstanding. In Arabic as an additional language it was good, but in Islamic Education it was acceptable. In Islamic Education, students had age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of most aspects of the subject but their Qur'an recitation skills were weaker. Only a few students across the school studied Arabic as a first language. Their attainment was unsatisfactory. In Arabic as an additional language, students had age-appropriate speaking and listening skills but those for extended writing were weaker. In English, most students had high quality speaking and listening skills and enjoyed reading widely for pleasure as well as for their studies. Most students developed sophisticated writing styles. In mathematics, students had excellent knowledge and understanding across all areas of the subject. They were confident problem solvers. They could independently decide their own solutions and apply their knowledge in real-life contexts. In science, most students reached levels that were well above curriculum and international standards. Students in the Post-16 phase had high levels of knowledge and skills in physics, biology and chemistry.

Students' progress in most key subjects was outstanding. It was good in Islamic Education, where it had improved, and in Arabic as an additional language. In Arabic as a first language progress was unsatisfactory. In Islamic Education, most students made good progress because of their independent learning skills but their relatively slower progress in speaking Arabic affected their progress in both subjects. In English, students made outstanding progress across all areas, particularly in the development of their oral skills. In mathematics, students made the most notable progress in numeracy and problem-solving skills. In science, students made rapid progress in investigation skills, most notably in the Post-16 phase. Students with special educational needs progressed as well as other students in the different subjects.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development was outstanding. They were courteous and self-disciplined. They took responsibilities for their work and more broadly across the college very seriously. They supported each other very well and were sensitive to others' needs. They routinely adopted healthy lifestyles. They were punctual and their attendance rates were good. Students were well aware of Islamic rituals such as the Friday prayer and Hajj. They respected Islam and its teachings of tolerance. They linked many of the Dubai's social aspects to the influence of Islam, such as the dress code in malls. The students' understanding of the local culture and history was evident when discussing traditions such as camel racing, hunting and falconry, and when considering the rapid pace of development.

They were well aware of their own, their friends' and other cultures. Students were pro-active over issues related to their learning and school life which helped to improve facilities and the curriculum. They were involved in the Al Noor Centre for Special Needs and the Duke of Edinburgh programme to develop leadership skills. They ran a charity committee that raised funds for the less fortunate. Students were dedicated to conserving resources through the college Recycling and Green Clubs. Students were well aware of the environmental challenges facing Dubai and the world.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was outstanding. Teachers had excellent subject knowledge and a clear understanding of how students learn most effectively. Lessons were well planned and teaching strategies were varied. The range of student-centred activities in lessons nurtured critical thinking and successfully met the needs of all students. Teachers asked questions precisely to review learning and to deepen students' levels of understanding. Teachers had high expectations of students in terms of both learning and work rate. Teachers knew their students well and gave individuals the necessary attention, support and challenge. Teachers promoted a positive learning environment, which gave students the confidence to take risks in their learning. Teaching was outstanding in all non-key subjects seen, especially in music and art.

Students' learning was outstanding. Almost all students were enthusiastic and confident learners. They showed a strong work ethic and could sustain high levels of concentration. Students worked effectively in groups and their listening skills were highly developed. They readily supported each other and were happy to share information and ideas. In a number of subjects, students enriched the lesson by asking pertinent and challenging questions. They showed high level thinking skills and the ability to make essential links between their current and previous learning. Students showed high degrees of independence and took responsibility for directing and shaping their own learning. They could discuss what they had learned, and showed awareness of what was needed to improve further. Particularly at the post-16 level, students had good opportunities to develop and apply their information technology skills.

The quality and use of assessment was outstanding. A comprehensive assessment programme was in place that included strong self-assessment by students and elements of peer assessment. Assessment of personal and social development was an integral part of the assessment process. Good use of short term individual targets was made in many subjects including French and art. There was a consistency of approach for setting targets across the curriculum, with the exception of Islamic Education.

The college kept detailed student tracking records, which were regularly analysed, and used to provide ambitious targets for students. These records were also effectively used to identify students who needed support or additional challenge. Feedback to students was highly effective. However, there were some inconsistencies in marking amongst and within subjects and these affected students' progress. Almost all teachers used assessment data effectively to provide support and challenge in their lessons.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was outstanding. Curriculum breadth and balance had been increased since the last inspection with the addition of a three-subject science course from Year 9 and a broadening of options for students studying A-level courses. The continuity and progression within the curriculum remained strong. Students were very well prepared as they moved from one key stage to the next and then on to higher education. The curriculum was reviewed annually in the light of current developments and student needs. For instance, the emphasis in science had changed to include additional opportunities for investigation and problem solving. To meet the needs of students, the number of sections in Arabic and English had been increased and this reduced class size. There was a rich, diverse and extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, competitions, sporting and musical opportunities, as well as local and international trips.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for the health and safety of students were outstanding. Policies were extremely effective and procedures were applied rigorously. The school environment was safe and secure. Transport arrangements were well managed and the arrival and exit of students on buses and private transport were safe. Buildings were maintained to a high standard and provided a stimulating environment for learning. Grounds were well kept and provided ample space and shade. Emergency procedures for evacuation were detailed and effective. Child protection arrangements were thorough and teachers had received appropriate training. Medical provision was of a high quality. Healthy living was promoted in the school through opportunities for physical exercise, healthy food in the canteen and information on notice boards. The quality of support for students was outstanding. Working relationships based on mutual trust and professional respect were extremely effective. Students demonstrated high levels of self-discipline. Positive behaviour management was effective in maintaining a calm and orderly environment.

Attendance and punctuality were maintained at good levels. Students received effective guidance for entry to higher education. University links were built up over time and were strong. The college was further developing its work experience programme with the support of the Alumni Association. The well-being of all students was of high priority and school programmes supported their emotional and personal development very well.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students with special educational needs were freely admitted, provided they could show potential to progress within a selective school system. Support was effectively organised by suitably qualified, specialist support staff. Well-targeted support was provided in lessons and when withdrawn from them, in full consultation with parents. The progress of all students with special educational needs was carefully monitored and they made outstanding progress.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership of the school was outstanding. The headmaster and governors had the same vision for the school's development and ensured that it influenced all the college's actions and plans. Leadership roles were very well delegated. Leaders at all levels took responsibility for promoting high academic and personal development standards. Staff members had a strong tradition of working in teams, supporting one another and being accountable. Communications were detailed and regular so that the staff and students knew what to do. The college had an outstanding capacity to improve on its previous best.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were outstanding. Priorities in improvement plans stemmed from careful evaluations of the school's performance and what it offered to students. Regular reviews of performance were used to set an agenda for individual and collective staff training. The school strategic plan had set overarching priorities for three years which then informed a range of shorter-term action plans. These combined to achieve staged improvement over time and helped ensure that the previous inspection report's recommendations had been fully met.

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The partnerships with parents and the community were outstanding. These were firmly based on shared values and aspirations, and helped students to learn well and achieve highly. The already productive communications between parents and the school had recently been improved with the use of a custom-made instant messaging system. The innovative E-reports and interviews combined to give parents regular updates on their children's progress to support their further development. The school had built an extensive network of community links and worked very productively with schools and institutions in Dubai and further afield to students' benefit.

The quality of governance was good. Following a full review of governance, the college had revised the committee function and widened the representation of stakeholders on the Governing Board. The revised committee structure was increasingly influential in informing the Board's decisions but had not been in place long enough for its effect to be evaluated. The Governing Body monitored the college's performance, held it to account and helped set the strategic direction through the joint review and planning timetable.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources, was outstanding. Management procedures were highly efficient and enabled the college to function smoothly and focus on its core purpose. The college had a good balance of experienced and newly appointed staff, all of whom were very well qualified and trained. The college had a full suite of well-maintained facilities and rich learning resources to service its extensive curriculum. There were well-judged refurbishment plans that kept the school up-to-date, such as the considered investments in technology infrastructure and pilot programmes of information and communications technology use in lessons.

[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 | 245 | 36% |
| | Last year | 346 | 53% |
| Teachers | 60 | | 68% |
| Students | 99 | | 31% |

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

A minority of parents responded to their survey, fewer than last year. A majority of teachers responded to their survey. About a third of the senior students responded to their survey. Parents, students and teachers were strongly positive in their views of the school and had very few concerns. There was a close coherence of views. Students enjoyed school, felt free from bullying and were kept safe. They agreed that the choice of subjects and extra activities was good. Parents believed that their children made good progress, knew how to improve and were well prepared for their next steps beyond the school. Students agreed with them. Almost all parents agreed that both Muslim and non-Muslim students had a good understanding of Islamic values. Parents felt well informed and involved in decision-making. Parents, students and teachers agreed that teaching, learning and leadership were good. Students had access to a wide range of technology. Provision for students with special educational needs was perceived as being good. A minority of parents disagreed that students were involved in the wider community. Overall, parents agreed that the school fulfilled its promise regarding the curriculum.

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

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