

INSPECTION REPORT

German International School Dubai

Report published in April 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT German International School Dubai

Location	Al Quoz
Type of school	Private
Website	www.germanschool.ae
Telephone	04-3386006
Address	P.O.Box 391162, Dubai
Principal	Thomas Dietrich
Curriculum	German
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-19 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	528
Largest nationality group of Students	German
Number of Emirati students	1 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	28th January to 30th January 2013

Contents

The context of the school	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013	4
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 good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	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 well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	15
What happens next?	16
How to contact us	16

The context of the school

The German International School was opened in 2008 and is situated in Al Quoz, It is a private school under the auspices of the Standing Committee of German Ministers of Culture. It has students from Kindergarten to Grade 12, ages three to 19 years. The students are of several different nationalities but almost all have at least one parent who is German. The students speak a range of first languages. The school is, additionally, part of a worldwide network of more than 135 German schools abroad.

The German International School offers children who are German-speaking, or wish to be German-speaking, an education based on the curriculum of the German federal state of Thuringia, modified to conform to the specific requirements of the Ministry of Education in the UAE. Since 2011 it has had the approval of the Kultusministerkonferenz to prepare students for the internationally recognised German school-leaving examination (Deutsche Internationale Abiturprüfung). This is a bilingual examination and students are also taught and examined in specific subjects in English. At the beginning of the secondary phase students wishing to pursue more academic careers are prepared for the Deutsche Internationale Abiturprüfung whilst others are prepared for the German secondary school certificate (Realschulabschluss) and they graduate at the end of Grade 10. Irrespective of the final examination outcome, students are taught together in the same classes during the morning and the afternoon lessons and working groups provide the opportunity for specialisation.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- Students' good or better progress in Arabic, German, English, mathematics and science;
- The high quality of relationships which successfully promotes students' personal development, confidence, exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes;
- High quality learning across a range of subjects, particularly in the higher grades;
- Committed leaders and teachers who promote good quality teaching which has a direct impact on attainment and progress;
- The excellent leadership of the principal and the outstanding governance of the school.

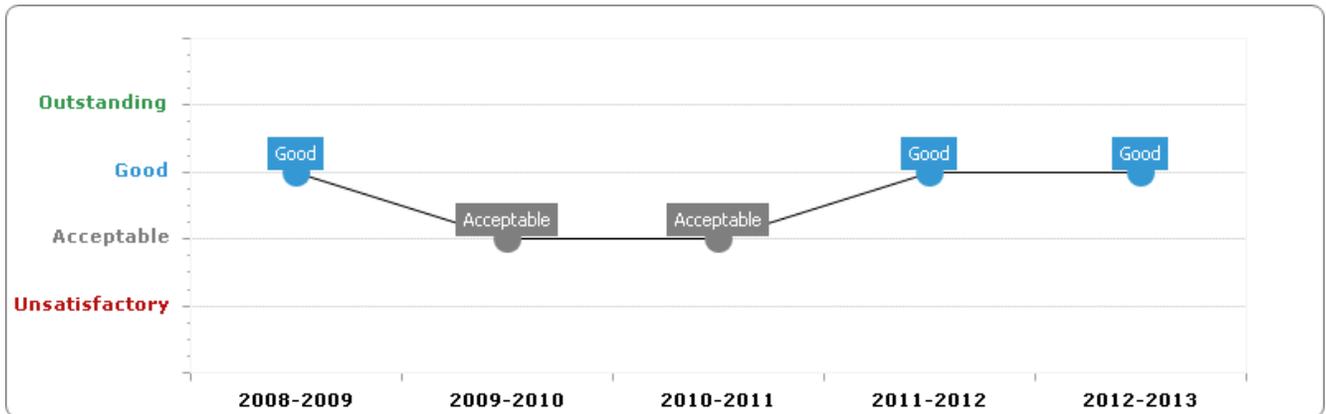
Recommendations

- To continue to improve students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education;
- To promote student initiatives to include environmental issues and develop regular links with the local community;
- To continue to develop curriculum continuity in subjects, especially across phases, using available data;
- To improve the library provision and the use of information and communications technology as a learning tool.

Progress since the last inspection

- There has been an improvement in Arabic as a first language in secondary and Arabic as an additional language in elementary;
- Attainment had improved in science in the secondary phase;
- In general, students with special educational needs were well supported;
- There was still a need to make greater use of attainment data, for example, in mathematics, to effectively support teaching and learning.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Elementary	Secondary
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good
German			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good
English			
Attainment	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding
Mathematics			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good
Science			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Elementary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Secondary
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	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
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Outstanding
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment was good across almost all key subjects but acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language in the secondary phase. Attainment in English was outstanding in secondary. In Islamic Education, in elementary, the majority of students used references from The Holy Qur'an and Hadeeth and related their learning to real life. In secondary, recitation was not well developed. In Arabic as a first language, the majority of students demonstrated good speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In Arabic as an additional language most students in elementary acted out dialogues and wrote short paragraphs, but in secondary students had limited spoken language. In English, children from Kindergarten onwards listened carefully and talked with confidence. Older students could adapt their speech for different audiences. Grade 7 students performed plays in English and Grade 11 students could successfully debate complex topics. Students of all ages used a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structure. In German, Kindergarten children listened attentively and responded appropriately. In primary they communicated well and they also wrote at length, with correct grammatical structures. By Grade 12, students demonstrated sound command of German. In mathematics, children in Kindergarten demonstrated strong number and shape recognition, while the older students were confident in algebraic manipulation and calculation. Grade 12 students understood complex and challenging concepts. In science, almost all children in Kindergarten had a good understanding of their environment were able to draw conclusions from their observations. Most students in primary understood key environmental issues. In secondary, students designed and conducted experiments to verify hypotheses.

Progress was good in all key subjects apart from Islamic Education in secondary where it was acceptable and in English in Kindergarten and secondary where it was outstanding. In Islamic Education progress at secondary was hindered by the students' limited opportunity to develop research skills and access independent activities. In Arabic as a first and as an additional language, students made steady good progress across the school. In English, students showed clear progress in internal tests and benchmarks. In German students made good progress during lessons and from year to year. There was clear progression in students' written work and a clear development towards acquiring self-assurance and autonomy. In mathematics, students made the best progress in number and shape in Kindergarten and early primary, while secondary students make particularly good progress using functions and their graphs. In science, students make good general progress in acquiring observation and recording skills from year to year and across phases. The progress in investigative skills was particularly good in the higher grades where students also acquired a good knowledge of scientific methods and gained an increasing autonomy in finding solutions for problems. Students with special educational needs made good progress in all key subjects.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students had positive and mature attitudes in almost all lessons and worked well independently. They were polite and respectful to each other and to staff and other adults. They responded well to feedback. Students worked well collaboratively and supported each other. Students followed the school's advice on healthy living. The food offered in the canteen helped students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 make healthy eating choices. Attendance during the inspection was high. Students arrived at school and to lessons on time. Most students demonstrated positive behaviours that reflected tolerance, friendship, and respect for all people. They were able to explain the influence of Islam on life in Dubai. They described their own cultures providing basic details and examples. However, their awareness of UAE culture and other cultures including art, and literature from around the world was limited. Student appreciated living in the multi-cultural society of Dubai. Students were responsible and contributed to the life of the school. They demonstrated a good work ethic during the lessons. A student council existed but was not yet pro-active. There were insufficient links with the community and other schools in Dubai. Students' involvement in environmental and community initiatives was limited.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was good overall, with some examples of very effective teaching. The positive rapport between teachers and students ensured a productive learning environment in most classes. Teachers had good subject knowledge and used it well to probe the understanding of students. Effective questioning skills engaged most students well. Teachers had high expectations for students' achievement. In the best lessons there was challenge, lively pace and opportunities for independent learning. Lessons were well-planned and the purpose of activities was clear, although lessons did not always end with a summary. There were missed opportunities to make use of information and communication technology in many lessons. Teachers planned to accommodate the different learning styles of students. Arrangements to meet the needs of those with special educational needs were developing well. There were particular strengths in the teaching of Arabic and English as an additional language.

The quality of learning was good. Students were keen to learn and interacted well with their teachers. There was a positive learning environment in most classes. Children in the Kindergarten made outstanding progress in listening and speaking in English because teachers showed a good awareness of how children learn. Almost all students were conscientious and prepared to work hard. They took responsibility for their learning, reflected on what they did and wanted to know how they could improve. These mature attitudes were also reflected in a willingness to engage in activities related to English language and Arabic, where they often took the lead in lessons or engaged in stimulating presentations and discussions. The supportive

collaboration between students was a strength. When working together they were respectful of each other's point of view.

The quality of assessment procedures was good. The comprehensive collection of data about individual students permitted an effective process for recording their achievements and monitoring progress. An extensive tracking process enabled the school to ensure that students continued to progress above expectations. The assessment data was the basis for informative progress reports for parents. There was a focus upon the identification of basic skills for Kindergarten children. When given the opportunity, older students were accurate in assessing their own learning and that of others. Assessment information was not always consistently used to plan alternative strategies for teaching students with special educational needs. In almost all instances, the marking of work was routinely completed, but supportive comments to indicate how students might improve their work were not always evident.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum had a clear rationale and it was reviewed annually. It was broad and balanced. Progression was planned and there was some choice of learning for almost all students at all stages of their education. There were new curriculum plans in Grades 11 and 12 in German, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology and geography. Transition arrangements between phases of the school ensured that most students were well prepared for the next stage of education. The school also made use of its contacts with other German schools in the area in order to review the curriculum. For example, German, history, biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics for Grades 9 to 10 had been revised in co-operation with the German School in Abu Dhabi. A further revision was also planned in co-operation with other schools. The school curriculum was well planned and reviewed to meet the needs of almost all groups of students and to foster their personal development in all phases of their education. There were good cross-curricular links to enhance students' learning and good opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking. A rich variety of extra-curricular activities also enhanced learning. Twenty different activities were offered in the afternoon, including sport, dance, languages, music, theatre, school newspaper, homework supervision and support lessons. About a quarter of students took part in these optional activities. There were insufficient regular curricular links which involved contact with the local community.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Good arrangements were in place to ensure the health and well-being of students. The school premises were in excellent condition, very well maintained, clean and secure so that students felt safe. Emergency evacuations were well rehearsed and great care was taken when students went on educational visits. Healthy lifestyles were promoted effectively. Arrangements for child protection were well established and understood by all teachers. Staff members provided excellent supervision of students at all times.

The quality of support for students was good. Teachers had very good rapport with students and exemplary behaviour was a notable feature. A culture of mutual respect had inspired confidence and promoted trust among teachers and students. Both teachers and students displayed great pride in their school. Attendance and punctuality were good and parents supported the school's policy to maintain high levels. The personal development of almost all students was very effectively managed; high quality guidance and individual support was available at all times.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school had appropriate systems to identify students with special educational needs. Procedures to assess individual learning needs and set specific targets for improvement across all the categories of special needs were developing well. There was a good range of enrichment opportunities for gifted and talented students. In-class and withdrawal from lessons, coupled with after-school support ensured that the majority of students identified as having special educational needs made good progress. Reluctance on the part of some parents to accept specialist support meant that not all students received the assistance they needed.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The Principal provided excellent leadership. He was also an outstanding role model in the classroom. The Principal and other senior leaders had a clear vision which was communicated well to all other stakeholders. The Principal and key staff were highly visible round the school and knew all children personally. They formed a very dedicated group and worked together effectively. The school had a clear ethos of collective responsibility and support for each other. Management and other tasks were widely devolved and staff understood fully their responsibilities and carried them out efficiently. This led to high levels of learning and personal development. Additionally the senior team organised a wide range of social events during the year so staff had an opportunity to meet in a more relaxed context. The capacity to plan and solve problems was excellent. The steering group concept was an exemplary tool for involving all stakeholders.

Further wide involvement of all stakeholders was also ensured through a range of working parties for subjects. These involved staff, students, parents and governors. This comprehensive, collaborative approach had raised standards in most areas. The results last year in the recent examinations for example, were positive since all students passed mainly with the highest grades. The school had a very good capacity to improve.

The school evaluated itself regularly and systematically and all staff, parents and students were involved in the evaluation process. The school knew its strengths and weakness very well and identified key priorities clearly, which resulted in an improvement plan whose targets were realistic and which had clear success criteria. Professional development needs were identified well and fully met. There had been significant progress in addressing some of the recommendations of the previous report in the short time since its publication. One notable improvement was in Arabic as a first language in secondary and Arabic as an additional language in elementary. There had also been improvements in Islamic Education but time was needed for these to have full impact. Standards had also improved in science in secondary. The number of high quality lessons had also increased since the last inspection and generally students with SEN are well supported. There was still need to make greater use of attainment data, especially in mathematics to effectively support teaching and learning.

The school has very productive links with parents which strengthened students' learning and helped to raise standards. Parents were represented on the schools steering group which was its key channel for management and change. As a result, the parents had been involved in many initiatives including the transfer arrangements from primary to secondary, aspects of school management, the appointment of a school counselor and the new system for running the extensive extra-curricular activities. Parents received regular reports on students' progress and good information on the next steps in learning. There were well established links with other German schools in the UAE, which had a significant impact on moderating levels of attainment, improving teaching and learning and developing the curriculum. Additionally there were links with a school in Leipzig in Germany which resulted in an exchange of students who undertook joint historical and environmental projects in the respective countries. There were also links with a local French school in Dubai and recently the two schools jointly celebrated the 50 years of Franco-German reconciliation.

The governance in the school was outstanding. The board was well established and several of its members had been in post for a number of years, which provided stability and continuity. The members, who were all parents, were committed and energetic. This year the board had decided to adopt a pilot project from Germany and nominate one board member to a paid post based in the school. This facilitated access to the board to staff, parents and students.

The board had a detailed knowledge of attainment and progress. For example, last year the board member based in the school attended all of the Abitur oral examinations to gain a detailed insight into standards. The board was well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through the monthly meetings with all stakeholders. The board provided outstanding strategic guidance and support and widely represented the school community as well as including expertise in a number of key areas. This expertise was used well to ensure careful planning and evaluation of the impact of initiatives.

The management at the school was good overall. The school ran smoothly and efficiently with good communications. The newly and partially introduced management information system provided an extensive learning platform. There were good levels of well-qualified and well-deployed teachers and assistants providing good supervision. Just under a third of the teachers were new and had undergone effective induction. School facilities and resources were good overall, but the secondary library was inadequate and poorly stocked. Interactive whiteboards were widespread except in an otherwise very well resourced Kindergarten, and overall, there were too few computers for students' use across 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	202	62%
	Last year	193	63%
Teachers	34		67%
Students	37		69%

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

The majority of parents, teachers and senior secondary students responded to the survey. Almost all of the parents were highly supportive of the school and commented very positively about attainment and progress in key subjects. The comments were in agreement on all of the main issues. All groups thought that the leadership, teaching and students' behaviour were key strengths of the school. Parents and teachers were of the opinion that the school provided a safe environment in which all students were treated fairly and with respect. Students and parents felt that their opinions were valued and that the school acted on their suggestions. Parents felt that school reports were timely and helpful. Overall, almost all parents, teachers and students were satisfied with the quality of education provided.

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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