

INSPECTION REPORT

JSS International School

Report published in January 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT JSS International School

Location	Al Barsha
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jssisdubai.com
Telephone	04-3256886
Address	PO 37232, Al Barsha South, Dubai
Principal	Mr. G James Richard
Curriculum	Indian(ICSE)
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-15 / Kindergarten to Grade 10
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1380
Students' nationalities	Indian (almost all)
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	24th September to 27th September 2012

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The context of the school

The JSS International School is a private school located in Al Barsha. The school opened in March 2009. It provided education for boys and girls from pre-primary to Grade 10, aged four to 15 years. At the time of the inspection there were 1,380 students on roll.

The school followed an ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education) curriculum. The number of teaching staff had grown in the last year. There were now 114 teachers across all phases. Twenty-one kindergarten teachers were supported by 17 teaching assistants. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. Students were grouped into 55 classes. Nineteen classes were in the kindergarten stage and the rest from Grade 1 through to a recently created Grade 10. Almost all students were Indian nationals but 43 came from 10 other nationalities. There were no Emirati students on the roll.

At the time of the inspection the Principal had been in post for two weeks. There had been an increase in the school roll since the last inspection of over 250 students and a considerable number of teachers had been appointed to the school during the past year.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Students' good behaviour, attitudes and desire to learn, their warm and purposeful relationships with their teachers and their enjoyment of school life;
- Teaching and learning in the middle and secondary phases and all students' enthusiastic involvement with the enrichment programme of activities;
- Students' personal and social development and the effective steps taken to ensure their safety and welfare;
- The strong and effective partnerships with parents.

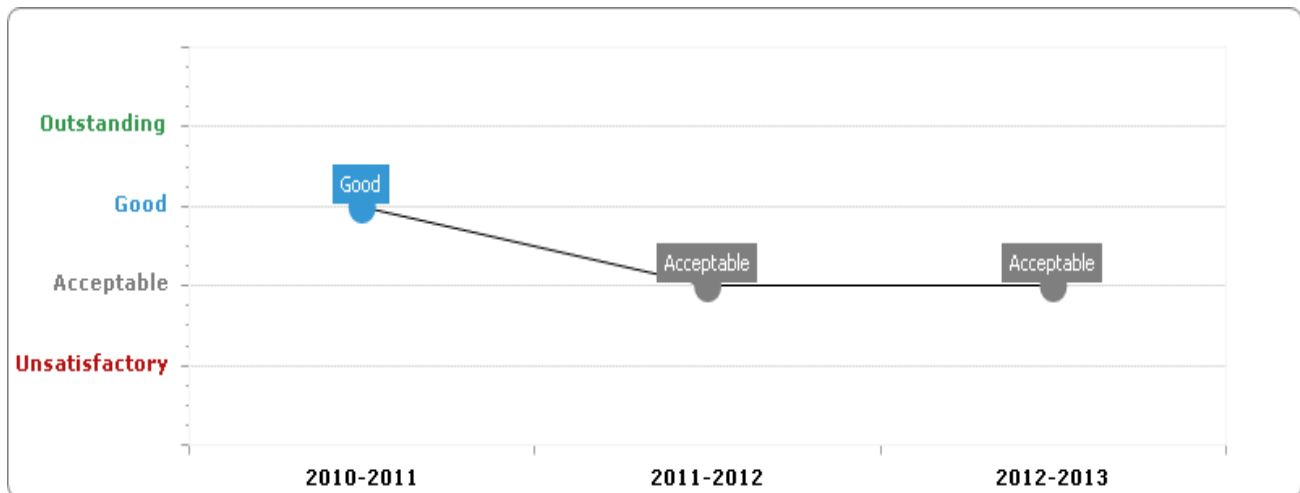
Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress of students learning Arabic as an additional language, particularly in the middle and secondary stages;
- Use the results of ongoing assessment to plan work that ensures consistent progress in students' learning, enables students to know and understand their next steps in learning and challenges all to realise their potential;
- Ensure that children in Kindergarten and in early primary experience a balanced curriculum that addresses their physical, social, language and cognitive development needs;
- Improve students' ready access to and use of information and communications technology (ICT) to support their learning;
- Ensure self-evaluation is rigorous and produces valid and reliable evidence to plan key priorities for school improvement.

Progress since the last inspection

- There remained inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning, within and across phases. Plans to meet the needs of all students were not delivered consistently in practice in lessons;
- Cross-curricular links in lessons were now planned regularly. Often there were good links to real-life settings. The school had improved opportunities for working within the local and wider community but this needed to be extended;
- The school's governing board now had a more representative membership;
- Students with special educational needs were included in regular classes and the majority of students were making acceptable progress in their learning;
- Teachers had been included in the school's self-evaluation process. Many evaluations made by staff were over optimistic. Self-evaluation remained an important aspect requiring improvement.

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment in key subjects was acceptable in Kindergarten. Particular strengths of Islamic Education were students' skills in Holy Qur'an recitation and understanding of given Islamic laws. In Arabic, listening across all phases was the most developed skill whilst reading skills were the least developed. Writing skills were also limited. Most students struggled to decode Arabic sounds and to read short sentences independently. In English, students demonstrated effective speaking and listening skills and read with secure comprehension skills. Skills in writing creatively were developed best in middle and secondary. In mathematics, students' knowledge, understanding and use of number facts were strongest across the middle and secondary phases. Students in the middle and secondary demonstrated good knowledge of algebra and geometry and used mathematical formulae confidently to solve problems. Most students had a good scientific vocabulary. The development of students' investigative skills was most well developed in the upper primary, middle and secondary phases.

Students' progress across key subjects varied considerably in each phase. Most students in primary showed better progress in all four language aspects of Arabic than those in other phases. In English, students were not always challenged sufficiently in Kindergarten and early primary. They had insufficient opportunities to use and extend their language skills through play and planned activities. Progress in mathematics and science was limited in Kindergarten and lower primary classes where students completed too many worksheets and did not regularly engage in practical activities. Progress was best in the middle and secondary phases where collaborative problem solving and investigative work allowed them to apply their mathematical and scientific knowledge.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding across the school. Students had very positive and responsible attitudes; they were respectful, attentive and keen to learn. They were self-disciplined as they moved around school, in clubs, and when they worked in groups. Relationships between teachers and students and between students and their peers were warm and considerate. Across the school, many opportunities were given for students to take responsibility and to demonstrate leadership. Students had an excellent understanding of healthy living; the importance of good nutrition was promoted in a wide variety of ways. Attendance was outstanding and students arrived punctually to school and to lessons. Students across primary to secondary showed an excellent understanding of Islamic values and the role these play in shaping the society of Dubai. Students listened with respect to the UAE national anthem and often sang along with notable accuracy. Students in the middle phase described accurately the changes

that had taken place in the lifestyle of Emirati people between the past and the present. Those in secondary showed excellent understanding of the structure of the government of Dubai and the positive influence of the Union on the prosperity of UAE. Kindergarten children had an appreciation of the features of Dubai, both natural and built environments, and how these impacted on their lives. Senior students had initiated projects which involved all students in community and environment initiatives including, for example, collecting for Syrian refugees and developing a recycling programme. All students had a strong work ethic.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable in Kindergarten and primary and good in middle and secondary. Subject knowledge was strong in almost all classes for the older students. There was insufficient knowledge of how younger students learn best and student choices were limited. There was a consistent approach to lesson planning throughout each phase. Planning did not always give sufficient attention to the different level of skill in each class and tasks were not always suitably matched to needs, especially of the more able. Across all phases, there was some good use of information and communications technology (ICT) by teachers to engage students. In too many lessons in Kindergarten and early primary, students did not get sufficient opportunities to contribute orally to lessons or to engage in activities. Consequently, progress was limited. There were many opportunities in the middle and secondary phases for the development of higher order thinking skills. There were strengths in the teaching of physical education and social subjects.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable in Kindergarten and primary and good in middle and secondary. All students were enthusiastic learners but many in Kindergarten and early primary were over dependent on teachers. In these two phases students were not encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and to make decisions about what to do and how to do it. Many students had good collaborative skills, especially in the middle and secondary phases and consequently they benefited from learning from each other. Almost all students were able to relate and apply their learning to the real world and to experiences from other areas of the curriculum. Enquiry and research was a regular feature of almost all middle and secondary classes.

Assessment was acceptable in Kindergarten and primary and good in middle and secondary. Consistent systems for assessing, recording and analysing student performance were in place and assessments were accurate and detailed. Good use of this information was made by teachers of students with special educational needs and those in need of additional support, in order to achieve a particular learning objective. However, there was a need to extend this good practice further so that assessment improved

the learning of all students. In particular, the assessment of the younger students' prior knowledge was not yet a consistent feature of planning for learning. Systems were also in place to track student performance although it was not a form that made comparisons easy. Consequently, teachers did not have a full understanding of students' abilities and this limited the feedback that they could give to students on how to improve their work.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable in the Kindergarten and primary phases and good in the middle and secondary phases. It was sufficiently broad and balanced and reflected the school's goal to 'relate education to life'. Cross-curricular links had been identified systematically. The secondary curriculum had been reviewed in order to ensure that the requirements of the ICSE assessments were adequately met. The Kindergarten curriculum was secure but did not always include opportunities for students to develop physical, communication or problem-solving skills. In the primary phase, insufficient attention was given to students' prior learning. Across all phases, the Arabic curriculum was underdeveloped and focused mainly on the learning of new vocabulary and memorising texts. In the middle and secondary phases, teachers regularly provided open-ended tasks to challenge students' knowledge and understanding. This resulted in a marked improvement in their critical thinking skills. The high quality enrichment activities served to enhance students' personal and academic development.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school provided a safe, secure and well-supervised environment for its students. There were exceptionally effective transport systems in place. The promotion of healthy living was supported by excellent systems to monitor students' health and the provision of information to enable students to take responsibility for their own healthy lifestyle. The school offered healthy vegetarian food and a wide variety of sporting options to promote exercise. Child protection and anti-bullying systems were well understood and managed effectively.

Relationships were warm and respectful and behaviour was managed well. Systems for promoting attendance and punctuality were effective. Class teachers knew their children well and the school counsellor supported students' personal development.

[View judgements](#)

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

Children were assessed at an initial enrolment interview and any special educational needs were discussed with the parents and child. Further referrals to the special needs department were made as necessary by teachers. Teachers were aware of students' individual education plans and child-friendly plans were used by students to record their own progress towards learning targets. Support was given both in class and through withdrawal sessions. Members of the special needs department had good systems in place to monitor and track the progress of students, which was acceptable in all subjects. They worked closely with parents. The special needs and physical education department worked particularly effectively together to meet the needs of students with specific needs. However, the special needs department lacked expertise to cover the full range of learning needs. The specific needs of gifted and talented students were not catered for sufficiently well.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

In his short time in post, the Principal had won the trust of staff. He had a clear vision for the school and plans for improving aspects of the school's work. The Senior Leadership Team provided good support to the Principal and individuals worked well corporately. They had been successful in bringing about a number of improvements in the last year, but more remained to be done. The middle management team of supervisors provided good links between senior managers and teaching staff. They, and heads of departments, had yet to achieve consistency in the delivery of high quality learning and teaching across the school. Some teachers had taken on delegated leadership roles to support school improvement through working groups. Overall, managers demonstrated a capacity to develop the school further.

The school had taken good steps to seek the views of students, parents and staff. Self-evaluation procedures had yet to produce consistently reliable judgements upon which to base plans for improvement. Supervisors provided teachers with feedback arising from lesson observations and teachers engaged in peer classroom observations. There was scope to share best practice more widely. In some grades, students were developing their self-assessment skills. A performance management scheme helped identify staff training needs. Training needs of classroom assistants and teachers involved with Kindergarten to Grade 3 needed further attention. Teachers did not consistently involve students in their next steps for improvement by providing them with feedback on their learning experiences. Progress had been made in addressing most of the recommendations in the last inspection report.

Partnerships between home and school were strong and purposeful. The school website provided an effective channel of communication for parents and students. Parents said that they found parent-teacher meetings and student progress reports helpful. They appreciated the school's open door approach to

dealing with any concerns. The Parents and Friends group provided a very good forum for communicating with parents and addressing some parental concerns.

The Board of Governors was now more broadly constituted and involved educationalists, business people and PAF representatives. This had led to certain elements of the school's performance improving over time. Accountability measures were now in place to support further improvement. The Board listened to parents' views and was very supportive of the Principal. Statutory requirements were appropriately met.

Staff numbers had continued to rise to accommodate a growing secondary phase and an increased student roll. The school had been successful in attracting suitably-qualified teachers but it needed to ensure retention in order to provide stability. The school had a good range of resources to support teaching and learning. It did not provide sufficient access to computers to promote independent inquiry and research skills.

[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	203	16%
	Last year	367	48%
Teachers	32		42%
Students	6		21%

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

Almost all parents were pleased with the quality of education at the school and felt that their children were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. Most thought their children were making good progress in Islamic Education and a minority thought this for Arabic as an additional language. Almost all agreed that their children enjoyed school, had access to a good range of extra-curricular activities, were treated fairly and understood Islamic values. All agreed that the behaviour of students at school was very good. A majority thought that the school's reports on student progress were helpful. Almost all teachers agreed that students behaved well in school and that any incidents of bullying were dealt with appropriately. All agreed that students were treated fairly and that students were safe and well looked after. They felt that the school welcomed students with special educational needs. Most students thought that they were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. A majority thought this for Arabic and a minority for Islamic Education. All said that they enjoyed being at the school, were well cared for and thought that students behaved well. They agreed that teaching and learning at the school was good.

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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