

INSPECTION REPORT

GEMS Our Own Indian School

Report published in January 2013

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 Our Own Indian School

Location	Al Quoz
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemsoo-alquoz.com
Telephone	04-3391188
Address	P.O. Box 26845, Dubai
Principal	Mrs. Lalitha Suresh
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	3,657
Students' nationalities	Indian and others
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	23rd September to 27th September 2012

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The context of the school

The Our Own Indian School is located in Al Quoz. The school opened in 1991 and, at the time of the inspection, had a total enrolment of 3,657 students, aged three to 17 years.

The school follows the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum. All students are entered for the CBSE examination at the end of Grade 12, but may also elect to sit for the examination at the end of Grade 10.

All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. They were supported by teaching assistants, most of them in the Kindergarten. Students were grouped in 106 classes, with the number of classes varying between seven and ten in grades Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12. This was an increase from the previous year as the school was now oversubscribed and classrooms were overcrowded in most phases. Ten different nationalities were represented among the student population. Fifteen students had been identified by the school as having some form of special education need (SEN). All of these students had an individual educational plan and received learning support from a variety of sources, including specialised staff.

At the time of the inspection, the school had recently appointed a new principal and restructured the senior and middle management teams.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- Sustained good attainment and progress in most key subjects;
- Outstanding relationships led to excellent attitudes and behavior;
- Rigorous risk management that resulted in outstanding health and safety;
- The high expectations of the Principal which contributed to a more strategic approach to leadership.

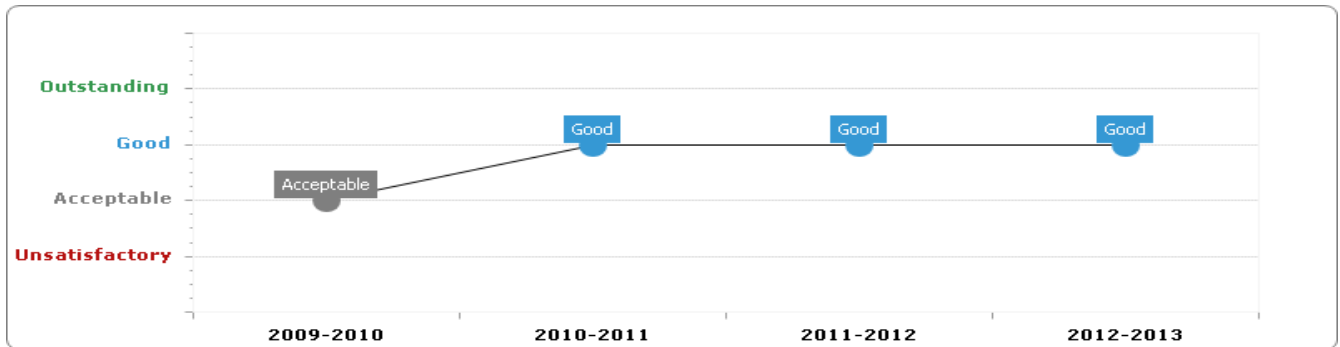
Recommendations

- Raise attainment and progress in Arabic by implementing best practice from within the school;
- Raise expectations in lessons through:
 - A better use of classroom assessment information to monitor the progress of all students;
 - Active and collaborative learning opportunities to develop students' critical thinking;
- Improve the identification and support of students with educational needs to enable them to make progress that matches their peers.

Progress since the last inspection

- Students of Arabic as a second language in primary, made better progress and this now matched the acceptable progress of students across the phases;
- The behaviour of students in the primary and middle schools was outstanding and had improved since previous inspections ;
- The outstanding awareness of health and safety across the school.

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	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
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	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	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	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	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	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment in Islamic Education was good in the primary, middle and senior schools. The majority of students knew and explained The Six Pillars of Faith, the meaning of worship, the Seerah and the conditions of Zakat. Students' recitation skills however were not yet in line with expectations. In Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment was acceptable. Almost all students had good listening skills. They were able to follow instructions accurately and respond to them accordingly. Reading skills were particularly strong in the higher grades across the school. There were limited opportunities for students to practice speaking and writing using their acquired knowledge of Arabic. . Attainment in English, throughout the school was good. On entry, students' linguistic skills were generally low as English was their second language, but in primary and secondary grades they developed good listening and writing skills. In mathematics, students' attainment was good. Across the school, almost all students achieved at, or above, CBSE expectations. In most lessons, almost all students successfully completed tasks and problems for each topic. Attainment in science was good as measured against curriculum standards. In lessons, the majority of students demonstrated knowledge and understanding that were above curriculum standards.

Students' progress in Islamic Education was good. The majority of students developed their understanding of Hadith, Fiqh and the miracles of the Holy Quran to levels above curriculum expectations. . The progress for senior boys was limited however due to lack of challenge and low expectations. Most students made acceptable progress in Arabic as an additional language, particularly in listening and reading. Most primary students read single sentences and secondary students expressed themselves well in both familiar and unfamiliar contexts. Students' progress in English was good across the phases. Low expectations in lessons hindered the linguistic development of most students. In mathematics, students made good progress. Clear connections between topics in different year levels enabled students to improve in the key strands of mathematics as they progressed through the school. Progress in science was good in both Kindergarten and Primary as the majority of students made better than expected progress in lessons when compared to their starting points. The progress of the students with special educational needs was acceptable in all subjects and all phases.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding throughout the school. Almost all students behaved extremely well in classes and moved around the school with a sense of purpose. Teachers and students shared very positive, cordial relationships. Most students worked well with each other in groups. The Student Council, prefects and class helpers played an active role in supporting the school's positive ethos. Successful healthy living projects had resulted in almost all students being well aware of the importance of healthy eating and exercise; most played sport regularly. Attendance and punctuality were outstanding. Most students showed respect for Islam and Muslim students recognised the underlying importance of their religion in guiding their everyday lives. In discussions, most students talked confidently about the UAE's national culture and local traditions. Senior students showed mature understanding of global issues and how this related to the development of the UAE. Students' awareness of other nationalities and cultures were limited. Most students understood the importance of protecting the environment at local and global levels. Older students understood the concept of environmental sustainability and the value of involvement in the community and were keen to develop more school-based projects.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching in all phases was good, although the teaching of Arabic was acceptable in all phases. The enthusiasm of the students for learning and the positive teacher-student relationships created a culture of learning in almost all classrooms. Many active learning strategies were observed, although overcrowding, lack of resources and time constraints sometimes reduced their effectiveness. Group work was common, but students were not always given enough time to complete tasks. Teachers had good knowledge of their subjects and planned for steady progress through the subject matter. This planning did not always translate into challenging opportunities for students to learn independently. However, the extensive professional development already done in this area had resulted in student-centred teaching methods becoming more widespread. Teachers used ICT in every class to enhance their subject delivery, and, in mathematics, some excellent student work was showcased via a public blog. The quality of learning in all phases was good. Students enjoyed their lessons and were highly motivated to do their best. They were able to connect prior knowledge to new situations and had no difficulties in making connections between subject areas or between their subject and real life when occasions arose. Students relished the opportunities to learn independently but these were limited when the learning was overly-directed by teachers in lessons. High student numbers in small classrooms also inhibited the ability of teachers to implement active learning strategies. Almost all students achieved the required objectives in lessons, but this was often because the objectives were not challenging enough. Differentiation commonly

consisted of providing students with different levels of work rather than using assessment information more effectively to determine appropriate challenge. When students were given activities to collaboratively explore open-ended questions, the learning experience for students was excellent. The quality of assessment practices and procedures in the school was good. Some teachers designed tasks to assess knowledge, understanding and application. A growing number of teachers were using basic rubrics with students and there was evidence of increasing use of reflection as an assessment strategy in some classes. Students in Kindergarten and Primary often used traffic lights to indicate their understanding visually. Teachers kept detailed records of assessment results to track student progress; although this information was not always used effectively to improve teaching and thereby enhance the learning of students, particularly those with special educational needs. In almost all classrooms, students' work was routinely marked but there was insufficient timely and effective feedback to assist students in improving their learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was good in all four phases and provided good emphasis on learning the basic skills in English, mathematics and science. It was broad and balanced and offered a choice of subjects to all students. Transition arrangements were in place and ensured that the students were well prepared for the next phase of learning. A regular annual review of the curriculum ensured that provision was made for all subjects and for students' personal development. Curriculum planning met the needs of children with different abilities and provides some opportunities to learn through hands-on experience but this aspect was not yet embedded. The curriculum did not ensure that students got sufficient opportunities to choose activities independently to initiate or reinforce learning. There were some extra-curricular opportunities such as assemblies, debating and environment clubs that enhanced learning. Some links to other areas and opportunities for independent learning were included.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The arrangements to ensure health and safety were outstanding. Internal monitoring reports and the results of external regulatory visits confirmed high levels of capacity in the school in this aspect of its performance. Transport arrangements were exemplary. The school was fortunate to have a doctor and three nurses who provided a high standard of care. All areas of the school were kept extremely clean. The supervision of students was uniformly excellent. Almost all staff and students were aware of the appropriate arrangements for child protection. The range of snacks available at break time needed reviewing in order to promote healthy eating more effectively.

Staff-student relationships were a key strength of the school. This positive relationship resulted in outstanding behaviour in all classes and around the school. Students were polite and courteous. Staff knew students' personal needs well and responded accordingly. Teachers were good role models for students to emulate. Attendance and punctuality rates were high. The procedures to support and guide students were outstanding. The school was proactive in providing careers guidance to students.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress. A very small proportion of them were identified with specific physical, learning and emotional needs. In the Kindergarten, childrens' needs were identified on entry. However, children who had any difficulties in learning or behaviour were not systematically put on a special education needs register. They were supported well in most lessons. From primary school onwards, teachers identified students' specific needs well. This initiative was recent and the school was still in the process of identifying more students. Some aspects of the curriculum were modified to meet their needs. The Special Needs Co-ordinators withdrew students needing additional support. The individual learning plans and the support provision focused mainly on English. They were monitored during lessons and supported by teaching assistants. The quality of the plans was improving but needed to be more refined. For example, it was unclear how teaching assistants supported them. The identification of the needs of students who had more general learning difficulties in lessons across all phases was inconsistent. Lesson plans included strategies to differentiate but they were not fully applied in all lessons, leading to only acceptable progress.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good. A positive working ethos emulated by the new dynamic and dedicated principal had led to greater stability. She had reviewed the distribution of responsibilities in the school. These were more strategic and well communicated by the rest of the leadership team. As a result, the capacity to improve the school further was secure.

Self-evaluation plans were of good quality. However, the leadership team needed to monitor them more closely, particularly at middle management level to ensure a more effective implementation. The new leader and her team had been very proactive in implementing strategies linked to the recommendations in the previous report, resulting in signs of improvement in some aspects of the school life such as the outstanding attitude and behaviour across the phases and the robust health and safety procedures. The school approach to evaluate, monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning needed refinement, with a particular focus on raising expectations in lessons and promoting students' critical thinking. There was a varied professional development programme in school. Teachers' performance was evaluated regularly leading to improvement targets.

The partnerships and communication with parents were good. Parents were well informed about both the academic and personal development of their children but they felt they could play a more active part to influence the key decisions in school. Links with local businesses and the community were improving. However, the impact of various initiatives on students' learning and development was not consistent in all the phases of the school. This was particularly the case in the middle and secondary schools.

Governance in school was good. The director supported the leadership team well and shared the same vision of improvement. He was aware of the negative impact of the growing number of students in school and strategies to preserve good outcomes for all the students in school were under review.

Staffing and resources were acceptable. Teachers held qualifications appropriate to the age ranges but their number was not proportionate to the number of students in school. Teaching assistants, however, were not used effectively in lessons. Resources for learning such as information technology were expanding but access to the computer rooms and the library for independent learning was limited. Students did not have access to showers in the PE changing rooms. The school was growing rapidly and students' accommodation such as classroom size, outdoors space and resources required urgent action.

[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	912	34%
	Last year	1463	37%
Teachers	91		53%
Students	386		65%

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

Around one third of parents and two thirds of students responded to the survey. Most parents and students were satisfied with their school. Most students believed they had a good understanding of Islam. This view was shared by the parents. Although a high proportion of parents thought the teaching was good in school, a majority of parents and children felt they would benefit from more resources and facilities. Most parents and students were satisfied with the progress made in school in various subjects. However, half of the parents and students were not confident about the progress in Arabic as an additional language. A majority of parents and students believed they would benefit from a wider range of extra curricula activities. Most parents and students felt the school was a safe and positive environment. The survey showed the school was inclusive and most parents, students and teachers believed students with additional needs were well supported. Most parents believed that the school was well led but the majority feel they could be more involved in the life of the school.

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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