

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai Scholars Private School

Report published in April 2012

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 Dubai Scholars Private School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dubaischolars.com
Telephone	04-2988892
Address	P O Box 2819, Dubai
Principal	Aparna Yashpal Verma
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-18 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 13
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,573
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	15th to 18th October 2012

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The context of the school

Dubai Scholars Private School is situated in Al Qusais. At the time of the inspection there were 1,573 students on the roll, a slight reduction on the previous year. 200 students were newly enrolled. More than 12 nationalities were represented, the majority being from India and Pakistan. Most students spoke English as an additional language.

The school offers the National Curriculum for England leading to IGCSE examinations in Grade 11. A small number of students continue to take AS and A-level examinations. The Kindergarten had recently adopted the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

At the time of the inspection, 16 of the 98 teachers were new to the school; this number included an expansion in the number of teaching staff. Almost all teachers held a first degree and 56 per cent held a recognised teaching qualification.

A few students had recently been identified as having special educational needs. A team of four part-time teachers and a student welfare counsellor had been appointed to provide support.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- The outstanding attainment and progress in English and mathematics in the primary, secondary and post-16 phases;
- The students' outstanding attitudes, behaviour and commitment to the school's inclusive values;
- The improved assessment in the secondary and post-16 phases;
- The curriculum in the primary, secondary and post-16 phases that is enriched by problem-solving and contexts relevant to students' lives;
- The increased capacity for improvement through the greater distribution of leadership.

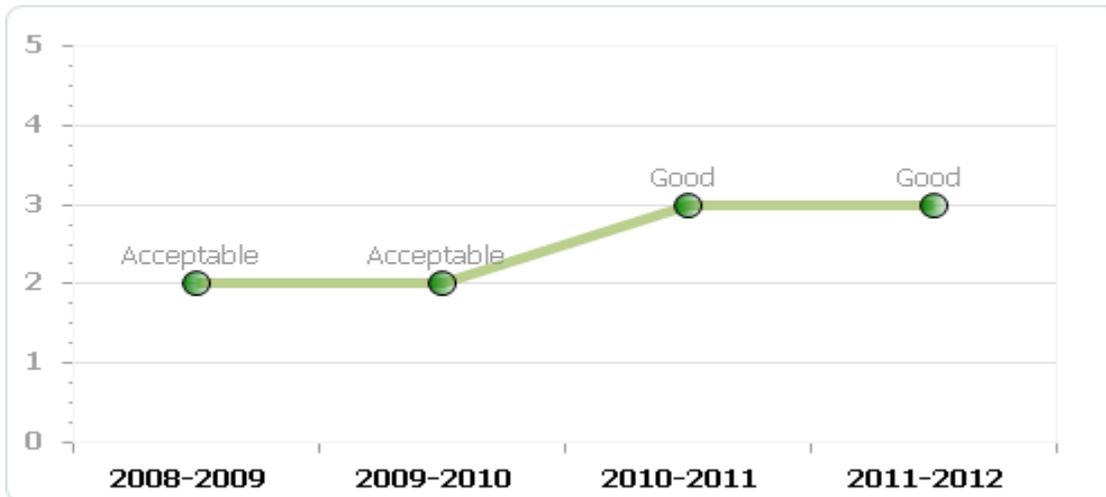
Recommendations

- Provide sufficient time for Islamic Education at the post-16 phase and for Arabic in the primary and secondary phases to ensure compliance with the Ministry of Education requirements;
- Provide opportunities for students to be more involved in the school's development;
- Improve the learning experience of children in Kindergarten to ensure that it is more effective and more child-centred;
- Put in place a system that will consistently track the progress of all students throughout the school;
- Further develop the provision for special educational needs by giving students appropriate individual educational plans with measurable targets, and ensuring that all teachers, parents and students work together to achieve them.

Progress since the last inspection

- The improved management and use of assessment in the higher grades;
- The creative development of the curriculum to include more situations and experiences relevant to the students;
- The steps taken to begin to identify and provide for students with special educational needs;
- The much wider distribution of leadership positions and the provision for leadership training;
- The improvements in the facilities, most notably the addition of a grassed playing field and additions to library stock.

Trend of overall performance



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Unsatisfactory
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	Good	Good	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Acceptable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Acceptable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Outstanding	Good
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Outstanding	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[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	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment in the key subjects varied but was mostly good or outstanding in the primary, secondary and post-16 phases. The one exception was Islamic Education at post-16; this was unsatisfactory because the school did not deliver Islamic Education program at this phase. Children's attainment in the Kindergarten was acceptable in all subjects. Secondary students understood the required Islamic concepts to a good level and they were able to link their knowledge with their own lives; however, only a few could infer lessons from Hadith and Qur'anic verses. Students of Arabic as an additional language conversed confidently using a wide range of Arabic vocabulary and responded to questions in short sentences. By the end of the primary phase, students could read and understand a paragraph. Students' attainment in English was outstanding, surpassing the oral attainment expected of native English speakers by the end of the primary phase. There were good opportunities for extended writing in the senior years and students showed a very high level of technical competence. From Grade 1 onwards, attainment in mathematics was outstanding. Secondary students showed a secure understanding of science and used increasingly complex technical language across all key areas of the sciences.

Progress was good or better in almost all subjects as students moved through the school, except in Kindergarten. Here, progress was acceptable and inhibited by too many teacher-centred lessons and little opportunity to develop a full range of skills in all subjects. Lack of provision of Islamic Education program at the post-16 phase resulted in unsatisfactory progress. In other phases, students made good progress in understanding Islamic etiquettes and recitation skills. Progress in Arabic was mostly good; by the end of secondary, most students showed good progress in independent writing skills. Students made strong progress in English. Steady progress in mathematics resulted in very good examination results at IGCSE and A-level. The curriculum in science ensured good progression and well-developed understanding. The progress of students with special educational needs was mostly acceptable, and not better because they often lacked well-targeted support; however, their progress in English was good.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students had outstanding behaviour and attitudes across the school. They had a strong sense of responsibility towards their school and they were very sensitive to each other's needs. Attitudes towards learning were positive; students were very keen to work hard and succeed. Students were self-disciplined, friendly and highly respectful towards everyone around them. They could explain the importance of having a healthy life-style and this was reflected in their choices. Their enjoyment of school had contributed to improved attendance since last year. Almost all students had genuine respect for Islamic values; however, only secondary and post-16 students could explain the impact of these values on Dubai.

Students were very thoughtful in integrating and linking their knowledge of local culture with their learning in key subjects. They built strong relationships with peers from different cultures. Most students undertook efficiently a number of responsibilities contributing to the smooth running of the school. A student council had been established recently, although it provided limited opportunities for students to voice their opinions and make suggestions. Students led projects confidently such as those relating to the environment which enhanced their understanding of environmental sustainability and conservation. However, their regular contributions to and involvement with the wider community were limited.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable in Kindergarten and good in all other phases. There were also many examples of outstanding teaching. There were very good relationships between almost all teachers and children. Teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge. Teachers facilitated good question and answer sessions engaging a wide number of students. However, in Kindergarten, most questions were closed and did not require children to think beyond basic recall. Most teachers used relevant real-life contexts in lessons and encouraged good independent work with high standards of presentation. Teachers' time management was good. Learning outcomes were nearly always established at the start of the lesson. Students were often challenged by teachers' good expectations. There were some good examples of differentiation although this was not consistent in all cases. The best teaching encouraged critical thinking. Teaching was also observed in French, business studies, physical education, dance and economics. Teaching seen in these lessons ranged from acceptable to outstanding.

There were good opportunities in most lessons for students to develop their social skills through group work. In Kindergarten, children acquired acceptable learning skills but had too few opportunities to learn through play and practical experiences, as well as by choosing their own activities. Elsewhere, students were enthusiastic and very well behaved in all lessons. They showed a high level of respect for each other and adults. Students were able to appropriately build on their prior learning and had good chances to relate their learning to the real world. There were some good opportunities for independent research. A key feature of students' learning was the confidence they showed in eagerly volunteering to answer questions and demonstrate what they had learnt to the rest of the class. The use of technology in learning was limited.

The quality of assessment was acceptable in Kindergarten and the primary phase; it was good in the other two phases. There were good systems for assessing students' attainment term by term and over the year. Teachers knew their students well as a result and discussed predicted grades with them. However, the assessment of students' progress was less consistent although student tracking was an emerging process and some effective target setting took place. Students were able to carry out good self-assessments and

peer assessments utilising relevant guidelines. Assessment information was used to review and develop good short-term planning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was good, except in Kindergarten, where it was acceptable. Progression, integration and coherence required further development, together with opportunities for exploration, investigation and play to meet the full range of needs of the children. In other phases, continuity and progression were managed well. Comprehensive curriculum review occurred annually across each subject area. The curriculum provided good challenge across the primary and secondary phases, and met the needs of most students. The provision for students with special educational needs was at an early stage of development. The curriculum was enhanced by the inclusion of cross-curricular links, independent study and research. Students frequently had opportunities to investigate topics and solve problems relevant to their lives. Critical thinking increasingly featured in primary subjects. Enrichment was primarily through school activities, trips and visiting speakers. The extra-curricular programme included a few community links and provision for sport had been considerably developed over the past year.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The standard of health and safety was good. A wide range of well-developed policies and practices promoted safety across the school. Effective supervision throughout the school day was enhanced by the involvement of students. Fire prevention, evacuation procedures and security arrangements were well planned and regularly tested. The general health of students was well monitored and good records were kept. An appropriate child protection policy was in place.

The quality of support was acceptable. The relationships between staff and students were positive and students were well known to staff both in terms of their academic and personal development. The school had successfully introduced new systems to promote attendance and punctuality. Mentors for students in Grades 11 and 12 had been established and were appreciated by students. Careers advice was limited to a few guest speakers; students received helpful advice on examination options.

[View judgements](#)

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

There were positive developments in the support provided for students with special educational needs since the last inspection. New systems and processes had been established to identify students needing additional support and there was greater awareness among all staff of the categories of special educational needs, including gifted and talented students. A growing number of teachers adjusted learning activities to meet the needs of all learners. The majority of teachers did this well but across the school although the range of support was variable. Individual learning targets had been set for some students, but were not specific and measurable, and so had limited effect.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good. Senior leaders projected a clear vision based on shared values and a high level of ambition for their students. They actively led the commitment to school improvement and demonstrated good capacity to develop the school further. The delegation of leadership together with a variety of professional training initiatives had been effective in improving teaching in the subject areas. In Kindergarten, a lack of clear understanding of the requirements of child-centred and interactive learning caused the phase to lag behind the overall drive for improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The leadership had taken the recommendations of the previous report seriously and had a good understanding of the areas of the school needing improvement. Action plans addressed relevant issues but lacked sharply defined, measurable goals and a source of data on student progress that could closely link actions to learning outcomes. Senior leaders and heads of department extended good teaching practice by providing frequent feedback to teachers.

Parental involvement was good. Parents were able to support their children's learning through good communication in the form of diaries, letters, e-mails and meetings with teachers. They found reports helpful and believed they gave them the information they needed to help their children take the next steps in learning. They appreciated the opportunity to attend school functions, to meet other parents and feel part of a wider school community. Although the school was active in supporting several charitable concerns, there were fewer on-going links to the local community or local businesses.

Governance was good. The board of governors, including two parents, was active in its support of the school. The governors' wide range of expertise benefited of the school. They took a strong interest in the quality of learning in the school and were a source of ideas for innovation. Their ability to hold the school to account had been enhanced by their decision to initiate the collection of improved data on student progress through external assessments in the primary and secondary phases. The board regularly sought the views of

stakeholders through a variety of channels, but a number of parents and students desired more formal avenues for feedback.

Management of the school was good. Routines were well organised and ran smoothly. Teachers were adequately qualified, although those teaching younger children needed a deeper understanding of how children learn best. The building was mostly well maintained although there was a need for greater vigilance in maintaining hygiene. The school had made some major investments in resources, notably a floodlit playing field and library resources. Increases in staffing in the library, sport and special educational needs allowed subject leaders more time to work with their departments.

[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	510	36%
	Last year	585	36%
Teachers	60		61%
Students	73		47%

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

There was a strong response rate to the survey from parents, students and teachers. They were largely in agreement about most issues. Almost all parents believed their children were safe and enjoyed school. Most were satisfied with the quality of education their children received and their academic progress in all subject areas, especially English. While most thought that the school was well led, a few desired a greater part in decision-making, as did the students. A significant minority of parents, as well as students and teachers, would like to see a greater availability and use of technology to support learning. Students thought that their academic progress was good and the majority knew well what was needed to improve. Only a minority believed that enough support was offered to students who learn in different ways. Just a few reported being active in community projects.

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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