

INSPECTION REPORT

Our Own Indian School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Our Own Indian School

Location	Al Quoz
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemsoo-alquoz.com
Telephone	04 339 1188
Address	PO Box 26845, Dubai
Principal	Mr. Nand Kumar Sharma
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	3, 605
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	Sunday 2nd to Thursday 6th October 2011

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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 had a total enrolment of 3,605 students, aged three to 17 years, at the time of the inspection.

The school follows the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum and is in the process of adopting the CBSE International (CBSE-i) 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.

There were 161 full-time teachers, including the Principal and senior leadership team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. They were supported by six full-time and ten part-time teaching assistants. Students were grouped in 106 classes, with the number of classes varying between four and ten at phases Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12. Ten different nationalities were represented among the student population. Nineteen students or approximately less than one per cent had been identified by the school as having some form of special education need (SEN). All of these students had an individual action plan and received learning support from a variety of sources, including specialised staff.

At the time of the inspection, the Principal was in his first year at the school and 32 teachers were newly appointed.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The Our Own Indian School provided a good quality of education. It had many good features, which included good progress and attainment in all of the key subject areas, with the exception of Arabic as an additional language. The quality of teaching and learning was good in all phases; it was least effective in the primary phase. The school had moved from the CBSE curriculum to the CBSE-i curriculum in several year groups, and had appointed additional Kindergarten support and SEN staff since the previous inspection.

The school had made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous report in each identified area. However, the teaching and learning of Arabic as an additional language was not as good

as it was in other subjects. Although professional development programmes had addressed teaching strategies for Arabic and special needs learners, the school has not yet fully succeeded in implementing them as everyday practice, particularly in the primary phase. Nevertheless, the school leadership and staff had good capacity to further improve all areas of the school, including those identified as requiring improvement.

Key strengths

- Attainment and progress were particularly good for girls in the secondary phase;
- The personal and social development of students in the high school, particularly the girls, was outstanding;
- Thorough procedures and systems promoted the effective collection and analysis of students' achievement data;
- The level of pastoral care was particularly high in all phases of the school.

Recommendations

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in Arabic, particularly in the primary phase of the school;
- Monitor and improve the quality of teaching to ensure that the highest possible attainment across the school, especially in the primary phase;
- Further develop the provision for meeting the learning needs of all students with special educational needs.

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

	Pre-Primary (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	Unsatisfactory	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

Attainment in the Kindergarten, primary, middle and secondary phases was good in all key subjects with the exception of Arabic as an additional language in which it was acceptable. Incorrect pronunciation of the words in Islamic Education lead to possible incorrect understanding of their meaning. Most students had acceptable speaking, listening and reading skills in Arabic. However, their writing skills were generally

below curriculum expectations. In English, the attainment of students in all four phases was good. Although attainment in mathematics was judged to be good at all phases, there was insufficient group work activity and limited resources in Kindergarten. Here, teachers did not maximise opportunities for hands-on learning to enrich the children's attainment. Throughout the school, attainment in physics was slightly lower than in other science subjects and students did not have enough opportunities to apply their knowledge through problem-solving.

Progress was good across all phases of the school except for Arabic as an additional language, which was unsatisfactory in the primary and acceptable in the middle and secondary phases. Progress in the Kindergarten was limited by the lack of opportunities for hands on activities on a regular basis. In the middle and secondary phases, the progress of the girls was better than that of the boys. Students with special educational needs were taught in regular classes with learning support staff but their progress was limited by a lack of appropriately differentiated activities and the absence of a dedicated teacher for students with special educational needs.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Good	Good	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Acceptable	Good	Good	Outstanding
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding

Across the school, students' attitudes and behaviour were very positive. They were especially strong in the Kindergarten and the high school, where students exhibited genuine respect for other students of all ages. They also demonstrated high levels of independence and an excellent work ethic. The girls demonstrated

outstanding understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Children's understanding and appreciation of Islamic and UAE traditions and culture were acceptable in Kindergarten as they had a limited understanding of how Islam influences life in Dubai. On the other hand, students' understanding and appreciation of life in Dubai, its religion and heritage was impressive in the high school. Students' civic, economic and environmental understanding was good in Kindergarten, primary and middle schools with knowledge of environmental issues being the strongest. High school students, both girls and boys, demonstrated a highly pro-active approach to their roles and responsibilities, and were acutely aware of their potential role as agents of improvements, both in and out of school. Their knowledge and understanding of the economy and environmental issues were advanced, especially those of the girls. Attendance levels were good across the school.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-Primary (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

The quality of teaching in all phases was good. Teachers' good subject knowledge enhanced the classroom teaching. In most lessons, time was managed effectively and appropriate resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) were used. Promotion of critical thinking and independent learning was evident in the high school and emerging in other phases. Positive interactions between teachers and students led to a fertile learning environment. The majority of teachers adopted a range of strategies to meet the needs of most groups of students but did not provide enough scope for independent work. Inconsistent teaching across the primary phase limited the progress of students in Arabic.

The quality of learning in all phases was good. Most of the students reported enjoying their lessons and took the responsibility of their own learning seriously. When given opportunities to work co-operatively, almost all students worked together well and supported each other's learning. Students were able to apply

previous knowledge to current situations effectively. They were able to learn independently and use ICT but opportunities to do so in lessons were too limited. Learning was directed too much by teachers in the Kindergarten where children also had limited opportunities to work independently.

The quality of assessment practice and procedures in the school was good. The school was able to monitor efficiently the progress of students due to the large amounts of data available on each student. This extensive tracking process enabled the school to ensure that students were making expected progress. An effective feature was the analysis focused upon the identification of skills and competencies related to numeracy, literacy, science and social awareness. Assessment information was not always used effectively to plan alternative strategies to promote the learning of different groups of students such as those with special educational needs. In almost all instances, the marking of students' work was routinely completed but the use of supportive comments to indicate how students might improve their work was inconsistent. Students had a good awareness of their performance grades and, in the senior school, they had increasing opportunities to be involved in the assessment of their own work.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Good

The quality of the curriculum across the school was good. The CBSEi curriculum had been successfully extended to ensure choice in learning for the majority of students. Academic subjects were allocated adequate time and the science curriculum offered good scope for experiential learning. The curriculum ensured sufficient continuity and students were ready for the next phase of learning. There was good progression and gains in students' knowledge, skills and understanding. Developing conceptual understanding was the focus of the mathematics programme. The school attempted to adapt the curriculum in order to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. However, this was not always effectively implemented in lessons across the school in all subjects. The curriculum was substantially enriched by a variety of co-curricular activities that offered ample opportunities to students to showcase their talents, such as the participation by senior students in United Nations simulation events. Learning had been further enhanced with the integration of life skills, environmental care, and community service into the study programme to meet the requirements of the CBSEi curriculum. In the Kindergarten, students had not developed skills in a meaningful, multi-conceptual manner in order to link what they had learned across all the subjects.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

School provision for the health and safety of students was good. The policies and procedures ensured students and staff were safe. The school environment was well maintained and supervision by staff and senior prefects throughout the day was good. The accessibility of buildings and deployment of resources met the needs of students well and helped to provide an inclusive environment in which to study. Medical staff were well-qualified and safety record keeping was thorough. Fire drills were conducted regularly and fire exits were clearly indicated throughout the building. School transport arrangements were very efficient. Student's personal records were kept secure. The school promoted healthy eating well through improved food choices in the canteen. Child protection procedures were clearly understood by staff and students.

The support and care offered to students were good. Positive relationships between staff and students were evident in the effective behaviour management and the confidence displayed by students when asking their teachers for advice with personal or academic concerns. Aptitude tests, workshops and seminars from a range of universities supported career choices. Students with special educational needs had individual action plans in place. However, teachers did not refer consistently to the plans, so these students sometimes made slower progress than their peers. The efficient systems for improving attendance seen in the girls' section were not evident in the boys' section.

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

The leadership of the school was good. Senior leaders shared school management activities collaboratively. The Principal set high expectations for himself, his leadership team and students. He had a thorough knowledge of all aspects of the school and its supporting operations.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Systematic and rigorous improvement planning addressed all the recommendations from the previous report. The school had mostly made good progress in implementing its action plan. The action plan and implementation strategies were clearly shared with all staff and systematically reviewed in subject meetings. The school was yet to develop student support programmes fully in order to continue to address the recommendations from the previous report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents had a high degree of satisfaction with the school overall. Parent surveys and interviews expressed a high degree of approval of the school leadership. Productive links existed between the school, parents and greater community. Parents were actively involved in the day-to-day school life of their children through personal and electronic communication and parents were very pleased with the opportunities provided by the school to encourage parental engagement in their child's learning. The school frequently and effectively communicated with the parents.

Governance of the school was good and had a positive influence on the work of the school. Regular meetings were held with the school's senior management team to discuss a range of issues including the school's action plans. There were official lines of communication between the board of governors and other stakeholders in the school.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. Effective deployment of staff met the needs of almost all students. However, the school had not fully addressed the staffing requirements for supporting students with special educational needs. Staff members were well-qualified and most were supported through high

quality, focused professional development. Classroom, corridors, toilets and common areas were well-maintained. A lack of adequately covered play areas limited the opportunities for full curricular and co-curricular activities.

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	911	25%
	Last year	1463	40%
Teachers	91		60%
Students	386		99%

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

About one quarter of the parents responded to the survey, fewer than last year. A majority of teachers and almost all senior students responded to their surveys. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education available at the school, but a few were not; senior students expressed similar opinions. Most parents believed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects, but in Arabic as an additional language a few parents indicated that progress was not good. Senior students again gave similar opinions. A majority of parents and students agreed that the range of subjects, clubs and activities available was good, but a few of each disagreed. A few parents indicated that the homework given to their children was not suitable. A majority of parents indicated that they were involved in the school but a few indicated they were not. A majority of parents and teachers agreed that inspection had led to improvements at 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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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