

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Dubai Modern High School

Report published in January 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai Modern High School

Location	Nad Al Sheba
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemsmhs.com
Telephone	04-3263339
Address	P.O. Box 53663, Dubai
Principal	Mr. Darryl Bloud
Curriculum	CISCE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	2,804
Largest nationality group of students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	1st to 4th October 2012

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## The context of the school

Dubai Modern High School is located in Nad Al Sheba, and is a private school providing education for boys and girls from pre-primary to secondary, aged three years in Kindergarten 1 through to 18 years old in Grade 12.

At the time of the inspection, there were 2,804 students on roll. Almost all of the students are Indian, with no Emiratis on roll. Just over nine per cent of the students had been identified by the school as having some form of special needs.

The school follows the Indian ICSE/ISC curricula, and ISCE examinations are taken in Grades 10 and 12. There were 164 appropriately qualified teachers including the Principal and the ten other members of the senior leadership team. They were ably supported by a team of 33 teaching assistants. Twenty-two new teaching members of staff had joined the school in the current academic year. The Principal had been in office for 12 years.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

### Outstanding

#### Key strengths

- Good or better attainment and progress in almost all key subjects;
- Outstanding personal development throughout the school;
- Community service and after-school activities enriching an outstanding curriculum provision;
- Outstanding quality of support with inclusivity permeating the whole ethos of the school;
- Excellent leadership that has produced a very effective team spirit and a common drive for improvement among all members of school community.

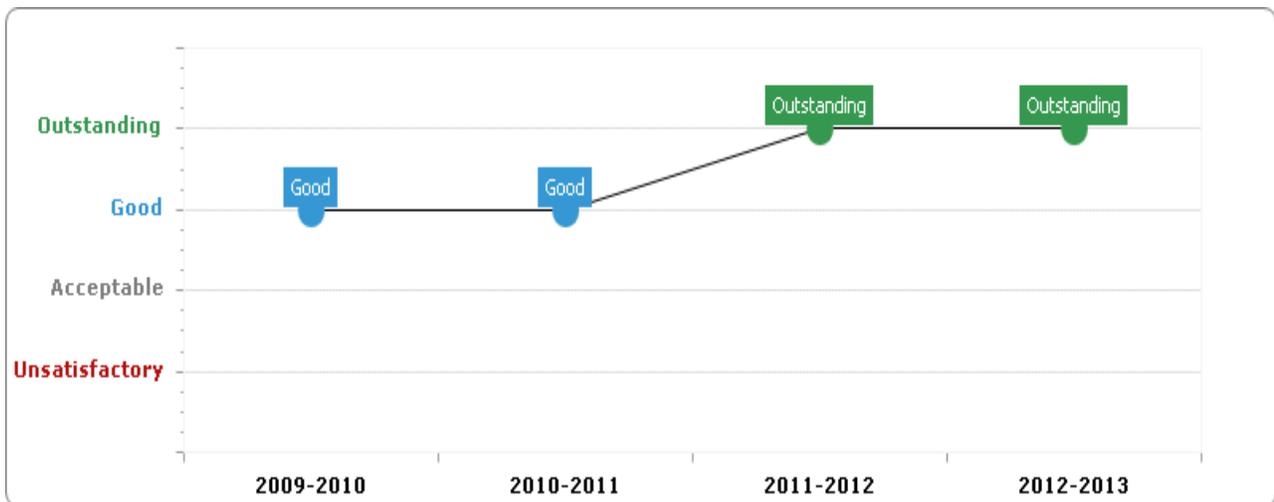
#### Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment in Arabic in the secondary phase;
- Further improve teaching and learning in the primary and middle phases by:
  - ensuring that teaching caters for the full spread of ability in the class;
  - extending opportunities for students to take more responsibility for their learning.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Attainment and progress in mathematics was now outstanding in all phases of the school;
- Students from all phases in the school demonstrated outstanding understanding of Islamic values, and described their impact on behaviour and attitudes in Dubai;
- The outstanding curriculum provision had been further enhanced through developments in cross-curricular links and real-life contexts in learning;
- The facilities had been further improved with the development of a new library resources centre and a refurbished Islamic Education resources centre.

## Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Good	Good
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Outstanding

[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	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[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	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment was good or better in almost all key subjects and phases. In Islamic Education, most students had good recitation skills and knowledge of Islamic concepts and rituals. Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was generally good. Across the primary and middle phases, most students were more confident users of the language. Their speaking, reading and listening skills were mostly above expectations. In English, children in Kindergarten were able to speak about their favourite UAE landmarks, listening carefully to the comments of others. Most students in the primary phase were able to read fluently at a level well above average for their age. Almost all students spoke fluently and in depth about topics for debate and discussion in the middle and senior classes. They listened attentively to others and were therefore able to build on what they had heard, to put forward their own arguments. In mathematics, children in Kindergarten were able to work independently to gather data from the world around them and show it in simple picture graphs. In the primary and middle phases, students coped very well with challenging work in number and shape, and later in algebra and trigonometry. By the secondary phases, students had very well developed skills in reasoning in the context of difficult topics including complex numbers and calculus. In science, the majority of Kindergarten children were independent learners. They discovered things for themselves and could communicate and provide good reasons for their conclusions. Students in the middle phase demonstrated a good understanding of the scientific concepts taught in class.

In Islamic Education, most students made good progress in their understanding and application of Islam's etiquettes. In Arabic, students in the early primary years and by the end of middle school were making good progress in their writing. Progress in English and mathematics was outstanding throughout the school. By the end of the primary phase, almost all students were able to structure a short story well using a wide range of new vocabulary. They demonstrated outstanding speaking skills when talking to the class. In mathematics, challenging contexts, a progressive curriculum and tasks matched closely to the needs of students helped to ensure that students acquired problem-solving skills as they moved through the phases. In most science classes, a strong emphasis on group work and high expectations resulted in outstanding progress for most groups of students. Students with special educational needs made good progress overall in all phases, with the support of their teachers and working alongside their peers.

[View judgements](#)

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development was outstanding across the school. Students were polite, helpful and caring. They displayed an excellent work ethic and took great pride in their school. They assumed their roles and responsibilities seriously; this was evident in the success and popularity of initiatives such as the student mentoring and buddy systems. Students were conscientious and active about leading a healthy lifestyle. Students demonstrated excellent understanding of Islamic values, and described their impact on behaviour and attitudes in Dubai. Most students had excellent understanding of Dubai's context, and they clearly described its diversity and multi-cultural nature. They were able to clearly describe their own cultures and reflected on similarities and differences between Indian and local culture. Students maintained a strong pride in their own Indian heritage and were aware of their identity. Students across the school developed and applied key skills in a range of entrepreneurial projects and student-led initiatives, many of which were directly involved with the community and helping the less fortunate. Students' environmental awareness was fostered through a range of activities that were incorporated into their daily school lives.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was outstanding in Kindergarten and the secondary phase, and good in the primary and middle phases. Outstanding teaching occurred where teachers' expectations were consistently high. The respectful rapport between teachers and students ensured a positive learning environment in most classrooms. Teachers used their strong subject knowledge and a variety of resources adeptly to reinforce new learning. Effective questioning skills engaged most students well, promoted thinking and helped teachers to assess students' understanding. In the best lessons, teachers allowed for students' different learning styles. However, not all teachers had high enough expectations of students, including those with special educational needs; a significant minority of lessons had limited challenge for all groups. Some over-direction by teachers did not allow students to make their own choices, and work in their own way and at their own level. There were particular strengths in the teaching of Islamic Education, drama, music and psychology; the teaching of Arabic was mostly effective but had some inconsistencies.

The quality of learning was outstanding in Kindergarten and secondary phases, and good in the primary and middle phases. Students had mature and positive attitudes to learning. They sustained concentration very well and exuded self-confidence in lessons. They collaborated well, for example in science and English, and were very respectful of others' views. Students, especially the oldest, were responsible about their own learning, knew how to improve and could explain what they had learned. They were good at thinking critically and creatively, and often related their learning to real life, but did not routinely have the opportunities to do so. Children in the Kindergarten were enthusiastic learners; they played in a manner that led them to explore their own thinking, analyse outcomes independently of the teacher and develop

imaginative aspects as a result of their natural curiosity. Effective systems for tracking students' progress enabled teachers to be aware of students' emerging needs.

Assessment was outstanding in all phases and used efficiently to plan and enhance learning at all ages. Challenging targets were set on the basis of assessments. Accurate information was used to focus on individual students' strengths and weaknesses, of which teachers had a sound understanding. Work ion books was marked accurately and accompanied with constructive and diagnostic comments. Teachers used a range of questioning techniques in lessons to enhance their view of students' attainment and progress. The analysis of data was used to supplement lesson planning and address individual student's learning needs.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum continued to be of outstanding quality, and staff had improved several aspects even further. There was a clear rationale based on developing exceptional citizens. The curriculum was broad and well balanced, and offered progression in a wide range of academic paths. Students benefited from well-organised arrangements to ensure smooth transition as they moved from one phase to the next. Regular review of the curriculum had resulted in improvements to a number of subject programmes, including English, science, mathematics, Arabic and Hindi. Cross-curricular links and real-life contexts in learning had been further developed. Successful work had been undertaken to put more emphasis on skills such as investigation. Use of information and communications technology by students had increased. Skilful planning ensured that the needs of all groups were met. Students benefited from a commendably wide range of enrichment opportunities, including links with local, national and international groups, and work to help others less fortunate than themselves.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school protect and support students?

Policies for students' health and safety were comprehensive and consistently applied. Teachers were fully aware of child protection procedures. The school's administrative officer met daily with support staff and transport teams to update them on procedures and hear any concerns. Comprehensive records were kept of fire drills, incidents and medical needs. Staff monitored what students were eating and awarded certificates, as appropriate. Good nutrition and a healthy life style were promoted in the older classes through the curriculum.

Teachers knew all their students very well. Relationships were mutually respectful and responsive which promoted confidence in students to answer and ask questions, and challenge assumptions. Students were fully aware of what was expected of them, so their behaviour was exemplary. Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality were highly effective. The school provided very effective pastoral support through a well-developed house system.

[View judgements](#)

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

Inclusivity was an outstanding feature of the school. The needs of students with a very wide range of special needs were identified early and very effective support systems were in place. A particular feature was the mentoring of younger students by students in Grades 11 and 12. Younger children benefited from effective support from adults. The special needs department disseminated detailed information about the needs of students with special educational needs to all teachers and provided in-service training. As a result, teachers were able to plan lessons to meet the needs of all students very effectively. When students were withdrawn from lessons they made good progress as a result of the effective tuition given in the smaller groups. The department worked closely with subject teachers to ensure that all students had full access to the curriculum. Overall, students with special needs made good progress.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of school leadership was outstanding. The Principal and Vice-Principal encouraged an inclusive leadership with all staff contributing. At all levels of the school, staff embraced the need for continual improvement. Across all phases and subjects, leadership was efficiently organised. There was a shared aspiration to support and develop the teaching staff through a range of professionally challenging initiatives. Teams at all levels worked well together to provide the continuity and progression of education

right through the school. The school's continuing improvements demonstrated that the staff and other stakeholders had a strong capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation and development planning were outstanding. Staff, students and parents shared in the identification of priorities for future improvement. Teachers' needs were identified through observation and discussion with senior colleagues and, if required, suitable training was arranged. Accurate self-evaluation and action planning were carried out at all levels, and enabled the school to assess its progress and make further improvements. Recently introduced new initiatives in the curriculum and the use of assessment data to track students' progress epitomised the school's determined drive for change and continual development. The school had been successful in addressing the recommendations of the previous report including, for example, the increase in good or better teaching in the primary and middle phases.

Partnerships with parents and the community were outstanding. Parents were very supportive of the school and most felt actively engaged in their children's learning. They felt that all members of staff were approachable and helped to quickly resolve any concerns. Parents were high profile around the school, welcoming the opportunities to participate in their children's education, for example, through attendance at assemblies, and taking part in class activities and trips. Parents received regular and informative reports about academic progress and personal development. Through opportunities provided by the school itself, or in collaboration with another partner school, parents had attended workshops in order to improve their understanding of the new learning initiatives that would enable them to support their children at home.

Governance was good. Governors were supportive of the school's aims and, through their effective engagement in the self-evaluation process, assigned advisors and senior officers were knowledgeable about the school's needs. Parents and students had efficient channels of communication through which to share issues with governors. The school's leadership was fully held to account by the governors and had responded positively to the targets set for the academic year.

Management, facilities and resources were outstanding and had improved over the last year. The school had developed both human and physical resources. At all levels in this highly inclusive school, the committed and hard-working staff fully supported the aims of the school. High quality specialist facilities created an inspiring learning environment for students of all ages and members of the broader community. A key strength of the school was its highly efficient day-to-day running which utilised the talents of some of the older students.

[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	907	47%
	Last year	783	45%
Teachers	133		81%
Students	222		63%

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

Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education available at the school, as were most students and teachers. Most parents believed that their children's progress was good in the key subjects, with the exception of Islamic Education. Most parents, students and teachers indicated that technology was used in learning. A minority of parents and students, a slight increase from last year, indicated that the range of clubs and activities available was too narrow. Most parents reported that the school provided appropriate guidance for their children in their future educational and career choices. Most students indicated that school leaders listened to their opinions about the school, but more than a few did not think so. Most teachers believed that inspection had led to improvements at the school and in their own teaching practices.

## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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