

INSPECTION REPORT

Al Khaleej National School

Report published in April 2013

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي
Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Khaleej National School

Location	Al Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gemsakns.com
Telephone	04-2822707
Address	P.O Box 26780, Dubai
Principal	Nigel Cropley
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,980
Largest nationality group of Students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	1,262 (64%)
Date of the inspection	20th to 23rd January 2013

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The context of the school

Al Khaleej National School, which is located in Al Garhoud, is a private school that provides education in English to boys and girls aged three to 18 years. At the time of inspection, there were 1,980 students on roll of whom 1,262 were Emirati students. The attendance reported by the school for the past academic term was good.

The school, which is identified as a United States curriculum school, had aligned with the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and mathematics, with California state standards in science, and with the UAE Ministry of Education standards in Islamic Education, Arabic, and social studies.

The school is organized into four stages: Kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school. Classes up to Grade 4 had both boys and girls; from Grade 5 on boys and girls were placed in separate classes. The high school is a college oriented program and students are graded from A to F in each course. Prior to graduation students are to take the PSAT, SAT 1, and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). A minimum of 30 Carnegie units or credits must be earned to be eligible for graduation from the school with a High School Diploma. The school employed 130 teachers, whom all had either Diplomas or Bachelor degrees, and 34 teaching assistants. The majority of teachers held earned teaching qualifications. In the last year, approximately one quarter of the teachers were new to the school. Most teachers are Arab nationals. The principal and one of the vice-principals were new to their posts.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- A positive school culture shared by all;
- Good attainment and progress by students in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language in the elementary school;
- The quality of students' social development, their awareness of how Islamic values influence Dubai and their sense of community;
- Good support for students reinforced by the promotion of their health and well-being;
- The positive impact of the recently appointed senior leaders on the school's development.

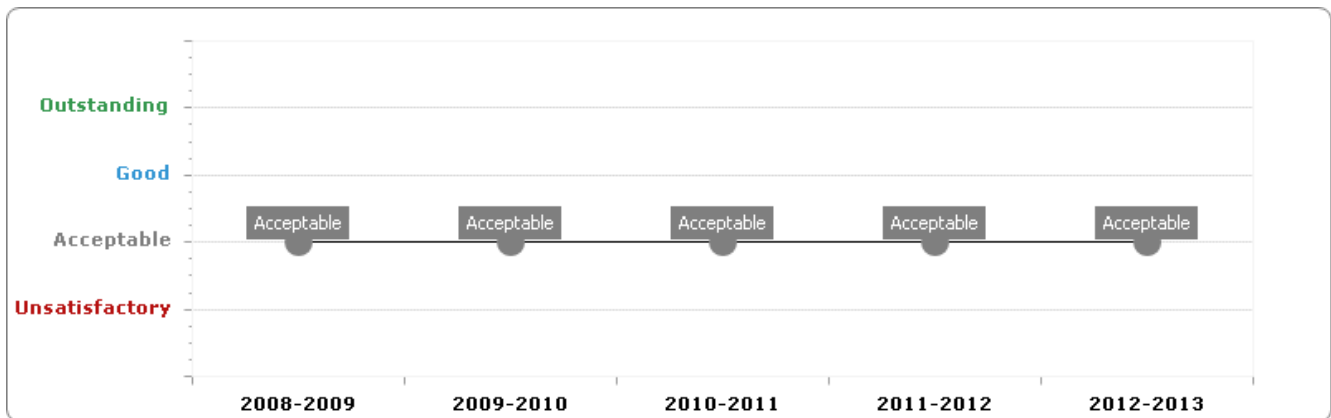
Recommendations

- In order to improve students' progress and learning skills, teachers should:
 - use assessment data routinely to set work that is sufficiently challenging for all groups of students;
 - ensure that all students are challenged;
 - maximise the opportunities for students to learn through enquiry, discovery, reflection, self-reliance and effective co-operation; and
 - provide a good balance of teacher-directed and student-led learning.
- Expand and enrich the curriculum including choices especially for middle and high school students;
- Continue to improve students' punctuality.

Progress since the last inspection

- The school had worked to raise attainment in the key subjects, with noted improvement in Arabic as a first language in the elementary phase and in Arabic as an additional language in the middle and high phases;
- The quality of teaching had begun to improve across all phases;
- The school had begun to use the Measures of Progress (MAP) to track students' learning; the MAP test was administered to students in Grades 1 through 10;
- With the appointment of a new Head of Elementary, there was revision of the Kindergarten curriculum with a strong focus on language development and a renewed effort to make sure that Kindergarten children had opportunities to be active learners;
- Steps had been taken to make exits from the school safer for all students.

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
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	Acceptable
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 was broadly acceptable, except Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language, which were good in the elementary school. The majority of students studying Islamic Education in the elementary school had good recitation skills and good levels of memorization of the Surahs they studied from The Holy Qur'an. In Islamic Education lessons, the majority of the students achieved levels that were above expectations, especially the girls. Elementary students enrolled in Arabic as a first language could understand teachers' instructions in Arabic. In English, attainment was in line with the Common Core State Standards at all grade levels. Writing and the use of language were developing well across all subject areas in all phases of the school. Students' knowledge of numbers and algebra was in line with Common Core State Standards in mathematics throughout the school. Attainment in science was acceptable across all phases of the school. Students' knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts were better than their practical and investigative skills. Examination results indicated that attainment was improving in all key subjects.

Progress was broadly acceptable, except for Islamic Education where it was good in all phases. It was also good in Arabic as a first language in the elementary school and in English in the higher phase. Across the school, students made acceptable progress in developing knowledge in most subjects. However, they lacked opportunities to make similar progress developing thinking skills, because they were not often given opportunities to apply what they were learning in real life situations. Students with special educational needs made acceptable progress.

[View judgments](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of students was good across the school. The strong personal and social development program in the Kindergarten provided the foundation for courteous and respectful behaviour throughout the school. Students enjoyed excellent relationships with the staff and each other. Following the school's advice on healthy eating and exercise, students could explain the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Attendance for term one was good. However, a minority of students arrived late to school every day. Most students' understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and their local, cultural, and global awareness were good across the school. Students showed good appreciation of the relevance and impact of Islamic values on life in Dubai. They reflected upon key messages in relation to their own lives and experience. Students had knowledge and understanding of local traditions and cultural heritage and recognized their importance and relevance to the UAE. Students fully appreciated and celebrated their own culture and heritage.

They demonstrated a mature grasp of cultural diversity, but their knowledge and understanding of common elements between cultures was less well developed. Across all phases of the school, students' commitments to community and environmental were good. Most students had responsible roles in the school and took care of school materials and equipment. They also participated in school projects and activities. Students understood the link between effort and achievement and finished their tasks to the best of abilities. Students participated in environmental activities, but involvement needed to be extended for younger students.

[View judgments](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable throughout the school, with a significant minority of good teaching in each phase. It was better in Islamic Education and English but not consistently good. Most teachers had good subject knowledge which enabled them to present new learning clearly and confidently. Lessons had straightforward objectives, and identical lesson planning across grades ensured equality for students. Teachers encouraged students to work in groups but the time spent doing this was often at the expense of the introductory phase by teachers. Teachers used resources to illustrate and consolidate students' understanding and to link learning to real life. Teachers sometime planned different work for students with different abilities, but not skilfully enough to ensure that expectations were consistently high enough for all students. More able students in particular were constrained by a lack of challenge. Teachers' involvement of students was varied. A minority of teachers asked good open questions. Most teachers accepted shouting or calling out too readily and so were not certain of their students' understanding. The less able students' involvement was limited by the shouting. In the good lessons, teachers energised their students, engaged them all and had high expectations of them in line with their abilities.

Learning was acceptable throughout the school. Students mostly enjoyed work and participated happily. They operated comfortably in groups but not productively enough; they were not always respectful of others' views and tended to promote their own thoughts unduly. Students were capable of working on their own but mostly they were passive, not truly independent learners. Students liked practical activities but showed too little curiosity or initiative. There was not enough scope for students to learn through investigation, including in the Kindergarten, and thinking skills were underdeveloped.

Assessment was acceptable across all phases of the school. New systems had been introduced the previous term to assess students at all phases above Kindergarten.

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There were other forms of assessment used throughout the school, with varying degrees of success. Informal assessment methods were widely and effectively used for most students and contributed towards their greater understanding. Teachers had a sound knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses. A minority of teachers were particularly skilled at guiding students towards their own discovery of new knowledge, through guided questions. A few teachers used a closing activity to check student understanding and reinforce the key points of the lesson. At the Kindergarten and Elementary stages, teachers regularly checked student progress in skills and knowledge with performance checklists.

[View judgments](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable across the school. The curriculum was soundly planned and consistent with the school's values. Curriculum progression in the key subjects and effective transition programs ensured student success. The curriculum was planned to meet the needs of all students. However, delivery into classrooms was still underdeveloped. Most gifted students required additional relevant activities to fully engage them in their learning. Arabic was taught from Kindergarten to Grade 12. French and art were offered to younger students, but the quality of these programs was variable. Information and communication technology was taught in Grades 1 to 12, but elective and advanced placement classes were not a feature of the secondary program. An active student council sponsored a variety of school activities raising funds for Dubai Cares and other charities. Field trips, assemblies, theme days, outside speakers, and a limited after school club program enhanced the curriculum.

[View judgments](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety was good across all phases of the school. The school had contracted with companies who, along with school leaders, were responsible for the development and implementation of policies that assured safety for the school population. These contracts included areas relating to bus safety, fire prevention and evacuation procedures, facility maintenance, food service, and most recently the development of a lock-down policy and procedures. A CCTV system had been installed to monitor entrances, corridors, and some classrooms to ensure the safety of students and the staff. Medical personnel provided medical services, educational programs, and addressed concerns of students, staff, teachers, and parents. Staff and students were aware of the policy and procedures for child protection arrangements.

Across all phases, the quality of support was good. Staff knew students well and relationships were good. Behaviour was well managed by the significant majority of staff, who acted as good role models. The school had successfully improved attendance, but the systems to promote punctuality were not applied consistently. Students valued the good guidance on future careers and applying to university.

[View judgments](#)

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

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator had developed very effective systems for the early identification of students with special educational needs. Good quality individual education plans were used to set targets and track progress. There was good specialist support for students with special educational needs in overcoming barriers to learning, such as difficulties in communication, behaviour, or medical needs. However, teachers did not always make sufficient use of the assessment information and individual education plan strategies to plan activities to meet the special education needs of students. There were strong links with parents, and the school worked closely with outside agencies. Provision for gifted and talented students was at an early stage of development.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good. The Principal and the Senior Leadership Team were committed to the school's vision and cared about its students. Leadership roles and responsibilities at both phase and departmental levels had been clearly defined. The Principal worked well with the leadership team, meeting regularly to discuss both curricular and non-curricular matters. A quality assurance team, which consisted of senior and middle leaders, had been established. A team of mentors had also been trained and were providing help to help teachers deliver consistently good lessons. There had been progress in addressing most of the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Leaders at all levels had good capacity to secure further improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The school prepared a self-evaluation and action plan. Senior leaders ensured that all subject leaders and teaching staff had been involved. The action plan contained details about how improvement was to be implemented and how it would be measured. The Senior Leadership Team monitored teaching and learning regularly. Professional development needs were identified and work had begun on meeting those needs. However, the overall quality of teaching had not yet improved from the last inspection.

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Senior leaders also monitored students' attainment and progress in key subject areas, and improvement in attainment and progress was noted in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language in the elementary school.

The partnerships with parents and the local community were good. Parents spoke positively about the welcoming nature of the school. They reported that the school used a range of communication methods to keep them informed, including letters, the school's website, e-mails, SMS messages, communication books, and parents' meetings. Parents were kept informed of their children's academic progress through term report cards. They also reported frequent opportunities to talk with teachers about their children's progress and noted that the principal was always available if they had a concern or problem. Parents also stated that the Parents' Support Group made a valued contribution to the partnership with parents. The school had established a few links with the community, inviting speakers including police, doctors, and imams, but links required further development.

Governance of the school was good. The governing body, which did not include community representatives, staff members or parents, exerted a positive influence on the school. The governing body had a good knowledge of the school and a strong commitment to the school. It sought feedback from parents and the school community. The governing body held the school accountable for all aspects of its performance.

The quality of staffing, facilities, and resources was acceptable. The Principal managed the routines of the school well; for example the timetable functioned well. There were suitably qualified teachers, and staff professional development was offered regularly. The school campus provided an inviting learning environment, but some classrooms and outdoor areas were too small. The school premises were easily accessible to almost all students, but those with limited mobility had access only to classrooms and resource rooms on the ground floor. The library was adequately stocked, but other resources to support teaching and learning were limited.

[View judgments](#)

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	159	11%
	Last year	63	4%
Teachers	9		7%
Students	0		0%

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

Only a few parents and teachers responded to the surveys. Most parents who responded reported a high degree of satisfaction with the leadership of the school. Most parents were also satisfied with the quality of education available at the school. Almost all parents reported that their children were well looked after and safe at school. Most parents reported that their children enjoyed life at school and that the progress made by them children in the key subjects was good. No senior students responded to the survey.

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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