

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Al Sadiq Islamic English School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Sadiq Islamic English School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	NA
Telephone	04 2634083
Address	PO Box 16196
Principal	Tajammul A. M.
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Ages / Grades or Year Groups	4-17/ Kindergarten to Grade 11
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,870
Number of Emirati students	62 (3%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 5th to Thursday 8th December 2011

## Contents

The context of the school .....	3
Overall school performance 2011-2012 .....	3
How has the school progressed since the last inspection? .....	3
Key strengths .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects? .....	5
How good is the students' personal and social development? .....	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? .....	8
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students? .....	9
How well does the school protect and support students? .....	10
How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....	11
What are the views of parents, teachers and students? .....	12
What happens next? .....	14
How to contact us .....	14
Our work with schools .....	15

## The context of the school

Located in Al Qusais, Al Sadiq Islamic English School serves a mixed population of students, about half of whom are Pakistanis. Other Arabic expatriate students attend, as do about 60 Emiratis, or three per cent. The current roll included about 230 students in their first year at the school.

The school offers a UK curriculum with modifications to extend the learning of The Holy Qur'an. Senior students write Cambridge IGCSE examinations in mathematics, business studies and three sciences. A few primary students wrote external assessments of a general nature that helped teachers assess their progress. The school employed about 115 teachers, only a quarter of whom were certified. Two teachers had joined the school in the previous week.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

## How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Al Sadiq was school in which students enjoyed their education in a positive and supportive environment. The school continued to provide an acceptable quality of education overall, for the fourth consecutive year. It was successful at delivering upon its promise to provide a UK curriculum in an Islamic context. Indeed, this was the main strength of the school, as students' attitudes and behaviour were consistently good and their promotion of Islamic values was clearly evident. Students showed good civic and Islamic understanding, especially the girls in the higher grades. The health and safety provision was good, particularly the care provided to students by the medical staff.

Since the previous inspection the school had improved in several ways, including students' progress in Arabic as a first language, the quality of support offered to students, and partnership with parents and the community. The school's leaders had worked to improve assessment methods and the use of assessment information, but had not been successful in improving the quality of teaching. The provision of learning resources remained quite limited, especially for mathematics, science and the development of information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

## Key strengths

- The students' attitudes and behaviour towards each other and their teachers;
- The students' understanding of Islam, and the culture and traditions of the UAE;
- The quality of health support provided to students;
- The school's ability to achieve its stated aim of providing a UK curriculum in an Islamic context.

## Recommendations

- Use assessment information regularly to inform teaching and learning so that students make good progress;
- Ensure compliance with the Ministry of Education regulations on the provision of Arabic each week;
- Improve the identification, management and support of students with special education needs;
- Ensure that middle managers have sufficient time to meet regularly to improve the school;
- Establish a governing body that is inclusive and holds the school accountable for its performance.

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

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

Students' attainment in the key subjects was acceptable at all phases, with the exception of Arabic as a first language in the secondary phase, where it was unsatisfactory. In that phase too many boys did not demonstrate the knowledge and skills expected of them. Specifically, their grammar and writing skills were underdeveloped. In Islamic Education, most students showed clear progress in the memorisation of The Holy Qur'an and good knowledge about Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). They showed respect and enthusiasm in Islamic lessons. In English, attainment in all grades was just in line with expectations for learners of English as an additional language. The majority of students demonstrated effective reading, speaking and listening skills, as was the case in Arabic. Extended writing was the main area of weakness in English. In mathematics in the Kindergarten and the early primary years, students were developing appropriate early number skills and had good understanding of shapes. At the upper secondary stage, students handled complex calculations and applied theorems with confidence. In science, students had acceptable knowledge and understanding of the facts about living things, materials and energy and forces. However, their comprehension of how science works was limited because of the lack of opportunities to carry out experiments.

Progress was acceptable in all five key subjects across all phases of the school, with the exception of the Kindergarten, where progress in English was good. In that phase, children's progress against their starting points was mostly above expectations for learners of English as an additional language. In Islamic Education, the progress of girls was better than that of boys in the secondary grades. In Arabic as a first language, students showed good abilities to analyse texts but did not have strong grammar or free writing skills. In Arabic as a second language, progress by girls was again better than that of boys. In English, mathematics and science, progress in lessons was frequently limited by too low a level of challenge to students, including the repetition of previously learned concepts.

The progress of Emirati students was in line with that of other students across the school and in a few cases was better than their peers' progress.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Attitudes and behaviour were good amongst almost all students. Both in classes and about the school, students worked well, shared resources and respected each other. Almost all students had considerable respect for members of staff. Attendance over the last full term was good. The student council worked with the Principal to suggest areas for improvement. Council members were appointed, not elected and thus did not fully represent the whole student body. Students had a clear understanding of Islam and its implications for their daily lives. Most understood the significance of the UAE's 40th anniversary. The majority of students appreciated Dubai's multi-cultural diversity and valued the different languages and customs in the city. They were very keen to protect the environment with 'Clean up the Beach' and recycling activities. Almost all students kept the school clean, but very few dropped litter and wrote on desks. Students were less aware of how Dubai had developed from a fishing and pearl diving community to a global city financed by oil, tourism and property development.



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

The quality of teaching for effective learning was acceptable at all phases, with better teaching evident in the secondary grades. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and were able to share it at suitable levels with their students. However, a few teachers did not understand how young people learned, frequently talking for too long, leaving their students bored. In the best lessons, teachers structured discussions which encouraged students to think critically. They also set high expectations. However, in too many lessons, teachers failed to clearly state their learning objectives or to summarise what had been learned. Only a small minority of teachers recognised that different groups or individuals had different learning needs. In too many lessons, teachers did not adapt their approaches to address those needs. Individual students with specific learning needs were not properly identified and supported. In most lessons, teachers did not allow or encourage students to take active roles in learning. Overall, a majority of teachers demonstrated a focus on their own performance rather than the quality of learning by their students. Teaching in other subjects including physical education, accounting and business studies was good. Teachers promoted interactive and engaged learning. They focused on developing specific skills and encouraged peer evaluation.

The quality of learning was acceptable throughout the school. Students in the Kindergarten and the primary grades lacked opportunities to work independently or solve problems and were too often passive learners. Links of learning to the real world were seldom seen, but were evident in Islamic Education, science and English. Learning was better amongst students in the upper grades. It was good in business studies, accounting and aspects of science. Most of the students were keen to learn and they enjoyed the few opportunities to discuss current topics. Students' critical and creative thinking skills were rarely developed in lessons. There were insufficient opportunities to learn through practical work in science or to develop skills in ICT for independent research.

The assessment of learning remained unsatisfactory across the school, although there were some instances of appropriate assessment strategies built into lessons. Despite members of the management team working hard to improve assessment and tracking procedures, assessment was too sporadic and informal. There was no system in place to generate assessment data to guide school improvement. Teachers used questions to check factual knowledge and sometimes understanding, but did not lead their students towards improvement through constructive feedback. Students' work was regularly marked but did not usually provide sufficient guidance on how to improve. Records of summative monthly and term tests were kept, but insufficient effort was made to use that information to plan teaching and thus better support students' learning.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was acceptable in all phases of the school. The curriculum was too heavily reliant on text books. The books provided for some Arabic lessons were not appropriate for second language learners. Although the series of books in different subjects did ensure continuity and progression, they restricted opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking. The curriculum was broad and balanced in the Kindergarten and primary phases but was constrained in the secondary phase by the lack of arts education. Some students' science education ceased after Grade 8, and there was no social studies after Grade 9. No English was taught after Grade 10. Practical science investigations by students only took place in Grade 11. The school was not compliant with mandatory time allocations for Arabic. The Kindergarten curriculum did not ensure that learning outcomes were made clear and that it included the skills needed by young children. The curriculum was reviewed annually but there were insufficient checks to ensure that the needs of the wide range of abilities were addressed in lessons. Extra-curricular activities included visits to a local community centre for the elderly, educational trips to a fruit juice factory and involvement in a 'Clean up Dubai' initiative. Secondary students also benefited from visits by local doctors that addressed health issues related to physical development, smoking and child abuse. Visits from the local police alerted students to the dangers of narcotics and obesity.

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

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

Health and safety arrangements were good overall. Weak aspects of school bus transport and some potential safety hazards were attended to in the course of the inspection. There had been no emergency evacuation drill since October 2010. However, facilities were kept clean and secure at all times. Good clinical facilities, staffed by a doctor and nurses provided high quality medical care. Medicines were stored securely and accurate records were kept up to date. A 'Health Week,' classroom health topics and assemblies promoted healthy lifestyles. Conversely, the school canteen did not provide enough healthy food options for students. Staff members showed concern for students' welfare and all had recently received training in applying the school's procedures for child protection.

The quality of support for students was acceptable. Staff-student relations were good at almost all grades, reflecting the Islamic ethos of the school. Students' attendance and punctuality were suitably monitored. The support for students with special educational needs was unsatisfactory. A counsellor provided students and parents with good advice, but the school lacked the specialist expertise to identify and address specific learning needs. Individualised education plans were not in place to ensure these students made good progress in their learning. Support for students with English as an additional language was limited, and the most able students were not challenged enough. Links with external support agencies were restricted to a few. Senior students received only very basic guidance on their course choices, future education and career options.

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

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

The overall leadership of the school was of acceptable quality. A shared understanding of good teaching was not evident across the various subjects and sections of the school, and that was the most important obstacle to improvement. The middle management team had grown since the previous inspection, enhancing the overall leadership capacity. The principal provided clear direction to the staff, with whom he shared important aspects of leadership. The vision for the school to provide an English curriculum in an Islamic context was shared by all teachers. However, the middle managers did not meet as a team frequently enough to monitor the overall performance of the school. The school's leadership team had fostered only limited progress on the recommendations from the previous inspection report, and demonstrated inconsistent capacity to bring about further improvements.

The school's self-evaluation and improvement plans remained unsatisfactory. The school's self-evaluation processes produced unrealistic evaluations that were entirely different from those of the inspection team. Leaders were not using assessment information as a tool for school improvement; the information merely generated term reports and identified students requiring support. The school had a brief, general plan to address the recommendations of the previous DSIB report but it lacked sufficient detail. Improvement was hindered by the high rate of teacher turnover, which had resulted in about one-third of the teachers being in their first year at the school. The new and returning teachers were observed regularly by senior leaders to monitor their performance, but the criteria for teacher performance were few and did not include learning outcomes.

The school's links with parents and the community were acceptable. There was periodic communication with parents by means of circulars. Parents visited the school regularly and attended open house three times each year. Parents had recently established a standing committee that concerned itself with

students' learning and overall development, but was too new to have had an effect upon outcomes. A few parents indicated that their roles in the school were not linked to school improvement.

The quality of governance remained unsatisfactory, as there was no governing body or advisory board. The owner had not responded to the previous inspection report's recommendation to involve the wider community in oversight of the school.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable overall, but there were clear weaknesses. The school had only a minority of certified teachers, which had implications for the quality of lessons delivered to students, especially in the primary grades. The facilities were generally well maintained and clean, but a few classrooms were too small for the numbers of students in them. There was no proper area for students to sit and eat their food during the break time; consequently, many sat on the ground to eat. The lack of information and communication technology (ICT) resources in classrooms limited students' learning experiences and the development of their skills in using ICT. Many desks in the upper grades were old and covered in graffiti. The outside play areas were mostly concrete and brick, but a new grass field was being installed at the time of the inspection.

## 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	547	55%
	Last year	374	48%
Teachers	93		81%
Students	133		93%

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

Just over half the parents responded to the survey, representing a higher rate than last year. Over three-quarters of teachers and students also responded. Most parents agreed that their child was making good progress in the key subjects, with the exception of Arabic as a first language, where more than a quarter

of parents disagreed that progress was good. A few parents also disagreed that progress was good in Arabic as an additional language. Most parents stated that their child enjoyed school, was safe and well prepared by the school for the next stages of education. However, a few parents indicated that there were not enough subjects and activities from which to choose and that homework was not suitable for their children. A majority of parents indicated that they were involved in improving the school; however, a few disagreed when asked if their views were listened to. Teachers and students were overwhelmingly supportive of the school on all survey items; however, student responses were conducted under teacher supervision with instruction.

## 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)

## 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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