

Inspection Report



Towheed Iranian School for Girls 2014-2015



إكسبو 2020 دبي
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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School information



General information

Location	Al Karama
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1991
Website	www.Gi-st.com
Telephone	04-3961234
Address	Al Karama, PO BOX 17, Dubai
Principal	Shahla Jumei
Language of instruction	Farsi
Inspection dates	8 th – 10 th December 2014



Students

Gender of students	Girls
Age range	6 - 18
Grades or year groups	Grade 1 - Grade 12
Number of students on roll	262
Number of children in Pre-K	0
Number of Emirati students	0
Number of students with SEN	37
Largest nationality group of students	Iranian



Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	23
Largest nationality group of teachers	Iranian
Number of teacher assistants	0
Teacher-student ratio	1:12
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	6%



Curriculum

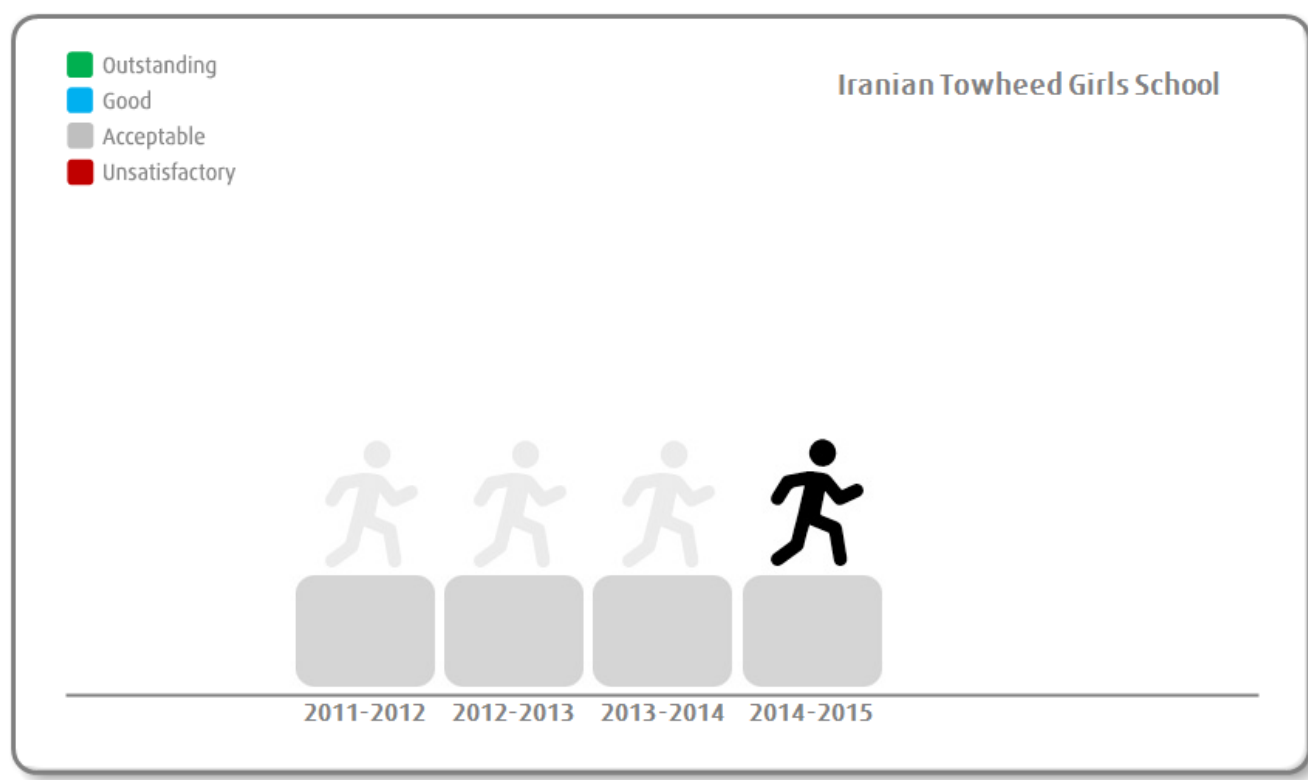
Educational Permit	Iranian
Main Curriculum / Other	Iranian
Standardised tests / board exams	Iranian Ministry of Education
Accreditation	None



Dear Parents,

Iranian Towheed Girls School was inspected by DSIB from 8th - 10th December 2014, and the overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **Acceptable**

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.



The inspection judgements were drawn from a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders, governors and owners are:

Strengths

- Students' attainment and progress in science were good throughout the school.
- Relationships between students and staff were outstanding, as was students' behaviour and their attitudes to learning.
- Students' demonstrated a good understanding of their own culture and that of the United Arab Emirates.
- Parents' were instrumental in supporting their children's next steps of education.

Areas for improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by:
 - broadening the range of activities and opportunities for students to learn independently and to think critically
 - ensuring teachers use questioning effectively and provide high quality written feedback to check, confirm and extend students' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - ensuring teachers accurately assess students' work to plan appropriately challenging learning activities.
- Improve the schools' systems for the identification of students with special educational needs to ensure interventions are matched to the needs of students.
- Ensure the school fully complies with the Ministry of Education requirements for the provision of Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language.

We warmly encourage you to read the full school inspection report.

The school is required to submit to DSIB an action plan identifying the steps they will take to address the areas for improvement. We have advised your school leaders to share this with you.

We trust that the information provided will help you understand and encourage you to support your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

A closer look at Iranian Towheed Girls' School



How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, Iranian Towheed Girls School provided an **Acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- In all phases, attainment and progress were acceptable in English and Arabic as an additional language. They were good in science across the school. In the primary phase, students' made good progress in mathematics, whilst in the high school, both attainment and progress were good. Students were enthusiastic learners. They worked well in groups when given the opportunity. However, limited opportunities to apply knowledge or learn independently had a negative impact on the development of students' problem solving and analytical skills.
- Students demonstrated outstanding behaviour and attendance. They had a good understanding of the values of Islam and the cultures of the United Arab Emirates and Iran. They donated to charities but their involvement in the community was limited.
- Most teachers had good knowledge of the subjects they taught and of the strengths and weaknesses in students' knowledge. However, teachers did not always match learning tasks and activities to meet the needs of all students. As a result, learning slowed.
- The school curriculum provided a broad and balanced range of subjects but was not fully compliant with Ministry of Education requirements for Islamic Education or Arabic as an addition language in primary classes. Changes made to the curriculum to challenge more able students or to help those with special learning needs were at an early stage of development. There were few extra-curricular activities.
- The school's provision for the health and safety of its students was acceptable. Students were provided with effective support for personal and social needs. However, the identification and support for students with special educational needs was unsatisfactory.
- The school's self-evaluation processes had improved and action plans now had measurable targets. The strong communication links and regular reporting to parents helped them to play an important part in their children's education. Community representation on the governing board was limited.


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




- Students with special educational needs were well nurtured and made acceptable progress in their personal development. However, their academic progress was unsatisfactory.
- The needs of students with more specific learning difficulties linked to reading, writing and mathematics were not effectively identified due to the lack of appropriately qualified staff. As a result, teachers were not given advice on recommended changes to the curriculum to help students make better progress.
- Information provided by the special educational needs team regarding students' learning needs lacked sufficient detail and, as a result, teachers were unable to fully support students.

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?

		Primary	Middle	High
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Acceptable 	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable 	Acceptable	Acceptable
Language of instruction	Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
 English	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
 Mathematics	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good 
 Science	Attainment	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good
		Primary	Middle	High
Learning skills		Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Primary	Middle	High
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Primary	Middle	High
Health and safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable 
Parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable



School **Inspection** Report

Overall school judgement

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Students' attainment and progress in science were good throughout the school.
- Students' demonstrated outstanding behaviour, self-reliance and excellent relationships with staff, leading to very positive attitudes to learning.
- Students demonstrated a well-developed understanding of their own culture and that of the United Arab Emirates.
- Parents' were proactive in working with the school to support their children's education.

Changes since the last inspection

- Students' attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language in the primary phase improved to acceptable.
- Students' progress in mathematics in the high school had improved to good.
- Systems for school self-evaluation had improved to enable the senior leaders to know better the priorities for improvement.
- The school had introduced Islamic Education into the middle and high school curriculum in accordance with the Ministry of Education requirements.

Recommendations

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the rate of students' progress by:
 - ensuring work provided for students is accurately matched to meet their individual learning needs
 - providing regular and frequent opportunities for students to collaborate, research and apply their knowledge to real life problems
 - using questioning and written feedback to check, confirm and extend students' knowledge, understanding and skills
 - ensuring leaders and teachers make better use of assessment information to plan effective learning which meets the needs of individual students.
- Further improve self-evaluation processes by ensuring middle leaders actively contribute to school improvement priorities and share good practice.
- Improve the identification of students with special educational needs to ensure that the curriculum is modified and support provided to enable them to make good academic progress.
- Ensure that the school fully complies with the Ministry of Education requirements with regard to the teaching and curriculum of Islamic Education and the time allocation for Arabic as an additional language.





Improved from last inspection



Declined from last inspection

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning?


Primary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable 	Acceptable 
Language of instruction	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In Arabic as an additional language, students' speaking and writing skills were under-developed. However, they made acceptable progress in applying grammar rules and understanding texts when writing and reading.
- In English, most students could understand phrases and high frequency words as well as understand the key messages in short informational text. Where teaching was more creative, students became engaged and made better progress in learning.
- In mathematics, students in Grade 1 and Grade 2 made good progress in counting. Their attainment overall was acceptable. Older primary students demonstrated better attainment in calculations and investigations, such as exploring the number of diagonals of a polygon. However, their problem solving skills were not well developed.
- Students made good progress in developing an understanding of scientific concepts and thinking. They developed laboratory skills through imaginative and investigative experiments. However, a few students' had not yet developed links between their scientific knowledge and the world around them.

Middle		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Language of instruction	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Good	Good

- Students' knowledge of the vocabulary used in Arabic as an additional language was acceptable. However, their speaking and writing skills were limited. They made acceptable progress in reading but were not always challenged to make better progress.

- In English, most students' speaking and listening skills were confident and fluent. Greater progress was achieved when teaching strategies were engaging and met the language needs of students.
- Most students made acceptable progress in mathematics particularly in evaluating algebraic expressions, understanding angles in a parallelogram, and solving simple linear equations. However, their ability to work independently and use prior knowledge to solve problems was underdeveloped.
- Students made good progress in developing their scientific thinking and understanding. Students had developed secure foundations of scientific knowledge on which to develop practical and investigatory skills. Linking this scientific knowledge to situations within their own environment was an area to be developed.

High		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Language of instruction	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Good	Good 
Science	Good	Good

- In Arabic as an additional language, students had a secure knowledge of grammar and understood written texts. However, the use of colloquial language influenced their speaking skills. Students made acceptable progress in the application of grammar rules. Their progress in extended writing was slower.
- In English, students were articulate, able to read proficiently, and express their opinions at an appropriate level for their age and experience. Students' could present well-structured pieces of writing but their extended writing skills were less well developed.
- Students demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of advanced mathematical concepts. They had well developed skills in algebra and calculus. Their skills in using and applying mathematical techniques were better than their problem-solving skills.
- The majority of students had a good understanding of a range of scientific concepts and principles which enabled them to plan and conduct practical and investigatory work.

	Primary	Middle	High
Learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students were able to listen attentively, respond to teachers' questioning, and could carry out practical tasks. However, they did not always understand what they needed to do to improve their learning. • Students worked well in groups when given the opportunity, but this was inconsistent across classes. Most students' could discuss topics and explain their learning to peers and could use learning technologies to create presentations about their studies. • Most students could make links between their learning, real-life situations and across some subjects, but this was limited in some lessons. 			

- Students did not have sufficient opportunities to analyse situations, solve problems or research independently. As a result, their critical thinking skills were less well developed.

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Primary	Middle	High
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Students demonstrated very mature and responsible attitudes to learning.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school was exemplary.
- Relationships between students and staff were friendly and respectful which promoted a positive learning environment.
- Students demonstrated an excellent knowledge of healthy habits.
- Attendance was outstanding and students were routinely punctual to lessons.

	Primary	Middle	High
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good

- Students demonstrated good understanding of Islamic values and their impact on contemporary life.
- Students demonstrated good understanding and appreciation of the Emirati heritage and its close links with their own cultures.
- Students celebrated and appreciated their own cultures and traditions. They did not fully appreciate the wider world cultures.

	Primary	Middle	High
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

- The Student Council was active in the school with wide representation of students on various committees. However, students' involvement with the local community was limited.
- Students demonstrated positive work ethic and participated actively in a range of class projects.
- Students were aware of environmental issues. There were limited opportunities for them to be engaged in recycling initiatives and schemes which supported sustainability.

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most teachers had appropriate knowledge of their subjects. The majority understood the most effective ways to teach and the best activities to help students learn. Teachers were broadening the range of approaches they used, particularly in the upper primary grades. In lessons there were increased opportunities for group discussions. The use of effective questioning was developing, particularly to promote dialogue. However, the use of questioning to probe understanding was inconsistent across subjects and grades. Assessment information was not used consistently to match tasks and resources to the learning needs of students. There were insufficient opportunities planned for students to learn independently and develop their critical thinking skills. 			

	Primary	Middle	High
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers recorded students' test marks only from the middle phase onwards. Internal tests were limited and did not assess problem solving and reasoning skills. Older students took the external examinations of the Iranian Ministry of Education. However, the school did not use external benchmarks to compare against international standards to improve the quality of teaching and student progress. The school had a system for collating assessment information. However, this was not used to analyse and identify the progress of individuals or groups of students. Teachers used test results to identify lower attaining students who were then offered extra classes after school. The use of assessment information to inform teacher's planning was at an early stage of development. This limited the effectiveness of the planning to meet the learning needs of all students. Through test information and observing in class, teachers knew their students' individual strengths and weaknesses. They gave students helpful oral feedback on the quality of their work. 			

4. How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?

	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum was broad, balanced and followed the Iranian state curriculum with some modifications to meet the needs and interests of the students. Continuity and progression across all grades were well established. However, in some subjects, for example in mathematics, there was more focus on the acquisition of knowledge rather than the development of investigation and problem solving skills. There were limited opportunities for curriculum enrichment. There were some strong curriculum initiatives linking history and science. However, cross-curricular links were not fully developed across the school. The curriculum was reviewed on an annual basis and amendments introduced to provide for the academic and personal development of students. However, there was insufficient time allocated in some subjects to enable students to make good progress. The school was not fully compliant with the UAE Ministry of Education requirements for the provision of Islamic Education or the teaching of Arabic as an additional language. 			

	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school made some adjustments to the curriculum to meet the needs of different groups of students. Optional subjects within the curriculum included a mathematics specialist programme and a wider science programme in the high school. Curriculum enhancements such as community links and the provision of extra-curricular activities, were still at an early developmental stage. 			

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Primary	Middle	High
Health and safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school had adequate child protection procedures in place for the care of its students. The school was a secure environment and all health and safety requirements were met. There was a range of systems in place, including record keeping, to keep students safe. The school facilities were clean and hygienic. However, the premises were not well adapted to meet the needs of those with physical disability. Ramps were provided at some entrances, but these were steep and there was no disabled access to the upper floor. The school had good strategies for promoting a healthy diet and advising students on how to lead a healthy lifestyle. 			


	Primary	Middle	High
Quality of support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were excellent relationships between staff and students. Systems were effective to promote improvements in attendance and punctuality. The identification of students with special educational needs was not secure due to the lack of specialist qualified staff. Support for students' personal and social needs was effective, but support for specific learning needs was unsatisfactory. Effective career guidance was provided to students by the counsellor. A parent group made a highly positive contribution to careers education in school by giving presentations on individual professions. 			

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

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school lacked appropriately qualified staff and learning support. As a result, the provision for students with special educational need was unsatisfactory. Identification of students with special educational needs lacked accuracy. The leader for special educational needs did not have the knowledge or skill to identify specific learning difficulties. Support provided in classrooms was purposeful but not always effective. Teachers did not have the specific information needed to modify the curriculum and their teaching approaches. However, the caring environment promoted the social, emotional and personal development of each student. Partnerships between the school and parents were established. These links helped parents to support their children's personal development but did not enable parents to support their learning. As a result of the unsatisfactory provision, students with special educational needs made unsatisfactory progress in their academic development. 	

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships between leaders and staff were professional and supportive. Staff were committed to improving the life chances of students. Staff responsibility for leading improvement in the individual subject areas was not clear. Although, the structure and format of action plans were improving, they continued to lack cohesion and consistency. Consultation with parents, students and other stakeholders was a strength. Feedback from parents and students helped inform action plans and contribute to forming a shared vision for school improvement. Leaders had improved the capacity of the team and were capable of improving identified areas for development. Leaders recognised that there was still more to be done on increasing the quality of teaching and enhancing curriculum provision to improve school standards and students' performance. 	

	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-evaluation processes and action plans contained measurable targets and had been instrumental in bringing about some improvement in the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Monitoring of teaching and learning was conducted by senior leaders and the Iranian Ministry Directorate. The resultant information informed teachers' professional development. Middle leaders had not had sufficient opportunities to share best practices which hindered the pace of improvement in the quality of teaching. Assessment information collected from internal and Iranian Ministry tests was used to provide a realistic view of students' attainment and progress. However, leaders' and teachers' analysis of this was at an early stage of development and adequate benchmarks were not yet established or understood. As a result of improvements in school self-evaluation and improvement planning systems, there had been some progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. 	




	Overall
Parents and the community	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents spoke highly of the school and were satisfied with educational provision. Parents had been instrumental in urging the school to better prepare older students for university and the school had responded to this request. There was a strong sense of community, which together with the effective communication allowed parents to play an active part in the education of their children. There was regular monthly update of student progress which was greatly valued by parents. There were productive links with other schools, for example, through sporting competitions. However, there were limited partnerships with local community groups and businesses. 	

	Overall
Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Governing Board followed the Iranian Ministry's principle of governance. This included representation from the well-established and effective parents association, but the local and wider community were not included. Governors had strong aspirations for improving the school. They reviewed the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders to address previous recommendations, and ensured staff awareness of inspection requirements. The Governing Board had provided the school with additional resources and support to meet the UAE Ministry of Education requirements for the teaching of Islamic Education and the teaching of Arabic as an additional language. However, all requirements had yet to be fully addressed. 	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient administration systems helped the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Adequately qualified staff were appropriately deployed. Staff expertise in the science laboratory contributed to the better quality of teaching in this subject. The school buildings were adequate. The school was not an inspiring learning environment. There were plans in place for students in the middle and high school to relocate to a new building. Sports facilities were unsatisfactory on the school site, but the school had made suitable alternative arrangements to teach physical education lessons. Learning resources were acceptable overall. There was a shortage of digital learning technologies for students to use. In English, the quantity of reading books was limited which reduced students' choice for the development of wider reading. 	

What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection 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	118	46%
	Last year	46	17%
 Teachers	19		66%
 Students	57		95%

- There was an increased response from parents this year representing almost half of the families in school. Responses were received from the majority of teachers and almost all students contributed to the survey.
- Of those who responded to the survey, almost all parents were happy with the education that the school provided for their children. Student responses were less positive.
- Most parents were happy with the progress their children made in English, mathematics and science but had concerns regarding progress in Arabic as an additional language.
- Almost all parents agreed that their children were safe in school and on school buses.
- A significant minority of parents and students were dissatisfied with the school’s poor provision of technology resources and more than a third of students were not satisfied with the limited number of extra-curricular activities.
- Almost all teachers were satisfied with all aspects of the school.

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

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This 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 school inspection will report on changes 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