

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Towheed Iranian School For Boys

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Towheed Iranian School For Boys

Location	Al Quoz
Type of school	Private
Website	www.bi-st.com
Telephone	04-3389954
Address	PO Box 33917, Dubai
Principal	Abdolrahim Manouchehri
Curriculum	Iranian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	880
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	Monday 14th to Wednesday 16th November 2011

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## The context of the school

Towheed Iranian School for Boys was founded 54 years ago and has been situated in Al Quoz for five years. The student roll was 850, aged three to 18 years. There were two different sections on the one campus. The Iranian or 'National' section accommodated male students from Grades 1 to 12 and offered the Iranian National Curriculum, supplemented with some UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) resources. The 'International' mixed-gender section accommodated Kindergarten through to Grade 8. This section offered a combined Iranian and American curriculum, predominantly taught in English and supplemented with some MoE resources. Assessments and examinations were syllabus-based and corresponded to Iranian MoE regional requirements and standards.

There were 64 full-time teachers, 40 per cent of whom come from Iran. The Principal was in his third year. The teachers in the school had a range of academic and teaching qualifications.

Students were grouped in 48 classes. Ninety-five per cent of the student population was Iranian. The school used to accept students with special educational needs. A different specialist Iranian school for students with special educational needs now enrolls these students.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

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

The Towheed Iranian School for Boys provided an acceptable quality of education for its students. Students achieved good attainment and progress in science throughout the school, and in mathematics in high school. Behaviour and relationships across the school were good and there was a great deal of mutual respect evident in classrooms and around school. Students had a good understanding of their civic duties and demonstrated good understanding and knowledge about Islam. However, the school did not fulfil the UAE MoE requirements for this subject. Students' economic and environmental understanding was good and they were developing a deep knowledge about how to care for their environment. The school's arrangements for protecting and supporting students were good.

The Principal, with the senior teachers, provided effective leadership. They had a clear vision which promoted the well-being of all students. The school had introduced a number of training initiatives to ensure that teaching improved and the positive impact of this was most notable in the International Section. Overall, the school's procedures for self-evaluation were at the early stages of development and priorities were not defined clearly enough in order to help the school consistently improve students' learning outcomes. The school enjoyed good, open communication with parents and consulted them about their aspirations for their children. The governing body, consisting of democratically elected parents and many stakeholders, supported the school well. The school's resources and facilities were sufficiently well used and organised in order to meet the learning needs of most students. However, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) within the classrooms to enhance students' learning was limited. Staff members were effectively deployed and the administration of the school was efficient.

## Key strengths

- The good curriculum in Kindergarten that led to good attainment and progress in all key subjects;
- The good progress and attainment in high school mathematics and in science throughout the school;
- The positive student-staff relationships;
- The good behaviour throughout the school;
- The strong links with parents and the community.

## Recommendations

- Ensure that the curriculum for Islamic Education and the time allocation for Arabic as an additional language meet UAE Ministry of Education requirements;
- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all staff have an accurate and shared view of what constitutes good teaching;
- Improve assessment practices so that the school has a more accurate view of attainment and progress in relation to international standards;
- Improve short-term planning so that lessons include a range of activities to meet the needs of different learners;
- Further develop the curriculum to provide more opportunities for students to develop their skills in extended writing, enquiry, creativity, analysis and problem-solving.

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

	Kindergarten	Primary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic Education</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 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	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good

Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was acceptable in all phases; students were strongest in basic writing. The ability to use the language to communicate orally was underdeveloped. In English, students' speaking and listening skills were better than their reading, and were generally good in middle school. A majority had age-appropriate understanding of basic grammatical structures. However, attainment in writing was weak, because of limited opportunities to write independently. Attainment in

mathematics was acceptable overall, with some good elements in Kindergarten and high school, where examination results showed particular strengths in the current Grade 11. Attainment in Kindergarten was good with children confidently counting into the 50's and knowing the difference between 'big' and 'small' when applied to shapes, and bigger and smaller when applied to number. In the international section, students showed good knowledge of equations of parallel, perpendicular and intersecting lines. Students' knowledge and skills in science were good across all phases. Many students used their scientific knowledge well in independent investigations. Examination data indicated that attainment for most students was above average.

In Arabic as an additional language, progress in primary was unsatisfactory and acceptable in the other phases. The best progress was made in sentence writing, and learning vocabulary in the middle and high schools. Progress in oral communication skills was limited. Students made acceptable progress in English due to regular opportunities to practise their skills; progress was limited by insufficient opportunities to apply new learning creatively, especially in their writing. Progress in mathematics was acceptable overall. In the Kindergarten, children used resources well to demonstrate progress in counting skills and making comparative statements, for example 'bigger' and 'smaller' for shape and number. Progress in science was good in all phases as a result of good levels of challenge for students. Less able students made acceptable progress, overall.

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

	Kindergarten	Primary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

Throughout the school, almost all students demonstrated good behaviour and attitudes. Relationships amongst students and with their teachers were positive and based on respect. Students demonstrated good self-control in corridors, assemblies and at break time. Attendance was excellent and almost all students arrived punctually for their lessons. Most students were aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and made wise choices about the food they ate at school. Students demonstrated good levels of appreciation and understanding of Islam which were well promoted across the curriculum. Almost all students readily took on the roles of responsibility that were given to them. However, most students did not always demonstrate a high enough level of independence in their learning and were frequently reliant on their teachers. Students had good knowledge of, and showed great respect for, the local traditions of UAE. Across all phases, students valued the diverse nature of Dubai. Middle and high school students demonstrated a well-developed understanding of the impact of diversity on life in Dubai and its ambitions. Most students had good economic awareness. However, the level of their understanding of the global economic issues was lower and a minority was not aware of Dubai's place in the Arab world. Almost all students had a secure awareness of environmental issues although they lacked initiative in taking on roles of responsibility in sustaining it in the community.



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

	Kindergarten	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching for effective learning was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in all other phases. Most teachers knew their subjects well. Teaching was strongest in mathematics and science. It was more variable in Arabic and English, with teachers having less effective techniques for teaching the wide range of ability within each class. Some teachers in English made incorrect assumptions about the level of students' understanding. In Arabic, poor planning and questioning skills were evident. In the best lessons, teachers had excellent subject knowledge. Teaching involved students regularly and teachers planned their lessons thoughtfully. In the less effective lessons, teachers tended to dominate the learning process too much. In these situations, students were taught mainly through the set textbooks with few other resources available. As a result, the individual needs of students were not always met. A minority of lessons lacked the necessary pace to engage students in an uninterrupted manner. The development of enquiry and critical thinking skills was very limited.

Learning was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in all other phases. It varied considerably by subject. In mathematics, there were sometimes good opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning by working through problems at the board whilst other students make constructive comments and helped to solve problems. However, in English and Arabic, students did not develop learning skills enough because teachers did not have sufficiently high expectations. Opportunities for self-directed study were narrow too. Students had to catch up periodically on their progress if they fell behind rather than being able to learn at their level during normal lessons. As a result, learning was limited in these cases, and student motivation suffered. Differentiated activities for gifted and less able students were very limited. The use of ICT in classes was not well developed.

Assessment was acceptable across all phases of the school. Comparisons were made with the other Iranian schools in Dubai but there were no international comparisons available. There were very effective assessment practices for regularly monitoring students' progress. These included regular tests at the end of a theme or topic, homework, some projects and formal examinations at the end of term. Assessment feedback to students was also regular. Good data were collected overall. The method employed for helping the less able and the gifted was almost always through requiring them to attend extra classes after school. This was instead of using the assessment data to adjust daily lessons to meet the diverse needs of the students. Although there was analysis of student outcomes, the setting of targets for students' potential next grades was less well developed.

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

	Kindergarten	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The quality of the curriculum was good in the Kindergarten because the written framework was applied effectively to meet the needs of children. Elsewhere, the curriculum was acceptable. Most lessons were closely aligned to the textbook so it was not always matched to students' different abilities apart from through extra-curricular activities. These were generally arranged to support students who were finding work difficult or to prepare others for academic competitions. There were not enough options to promote students' interest in arts subjects. However, students' commitment to the science fair did provide them with opportunities for independent research. Cross-curricular links were adequately developed through the design and technology course which complemented students' progress in mathematics and science. The curriculum was systematically reviewed using teachers' evaluations and students' progress reports resulting in routine developments, particularly in the International section. Nevertheless, evaluation procedures also identified a lack of progression in some subjects which had yet to be addressed.

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

	Kindergarten	Primary	Middle	High
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were good. All staff took their duty of care very seriously. Fire and earthquake evacuation drills were each carried out twice a month. Clear expectations and practised routines throughout the day, and on the school buses, ensured students were safe. The premises were extremely clean and tidy, and the school environment was respected by students. Toilets were regularly cleaned and soap and towels were available. All equipment was maintained in good condition. Healthy living was systematically built into the curriculum and promoted to students. All staff and students were fully aware of child protection arrangements. All members of staff received regular training.

The quality of support for students was good overall. Relationships between staff and students were very good and a high priority was given to students' personal well-being. Effective systems for the management of students' behaviour and the support provided by teachers, counsellors and supervisors ensured good standards of behaviour. Guidance on future education options was related to aptitude and age / grades or year groups. The monitoring and promotion of attendance and punctuality were proactive and very effective; attendance levels were outstanding. Additional support was provided for underachieving students by providing extra classes and this was appreciated by students.

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

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

The quality of leadership and management was acceptable. The Principal supported the school community in promoting a clear vision for the school and, with senior colleagues, had introduced a number of improvement initiatives. The senior management team, along with departmental heads, was committed to planning and implementing improvement strategies. The Teachers' and Students' Councils effectively engaged in improvement activities. Senior teachers carried out regular lesson observations. The school was developing arrangements to match professional development training to the needs identified as part of teachers' performance management procedures.

The procedures for school self-evaluation were acceptable. Priorities were not defined clearly enough in order to help the school consistently improve students' learning outcomes. The procedures were inclusive, with staff at all levels making contributions and committed to planning, and implementing strategies for improvement. Much of the written material generated was descriptive and did not always focus on evaluation. Identified priorities were often too general and this limited their rigorous application and demonstrable, measured impact.

The school's partnerships with parents and the community were good. There were many opportunities to consult parents about their views. The school adopted the Iranian MoE model for parent-teacher associations. In this school, the association was very active and also contributed to the role of the Governing Body. Teachers met with parents regularly and provided written reports about students' progress. There was some guidance provided for parents on how they could support their children's learning at home. Through questionnaires, parents were engaged in teacher appraisal procedures. The school had a significant role within the Iranian community in the UAE.

Governance was acceptable. The school's governing body consisted of a wide range of stakeholders including parents, the Principal, a representative elected by the teachers and, on occasions, a member of the Students' Council. This enabled the governing body to provide broad feedback, advice and support to

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the school. The school was accountable to the governing body and provided regular reports about its work. The day-to-day running of the school, and recruitment procedures, were delegated to the school's leadership and administration. The governing body had a full overview of expenditure and liaised with visiting Iranian MoE representatives.

The quality of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The administration and day-to-day organisation were efficient. There were sufficient qualified staff in the school and their deployment was adequate. The school premises were clean and well maintained, and access was monitored throughout the day. Teachers and students did not always make effective use of ICT resources in classrooms, relying instead on the ICT laboratories which consequently limited their access to quality information. Educational resources, when available, were not always put to the best use. The centrally located library had a relevant range of suitable learning materials, and older students could carry out independent research in the ICT annex. The school hosted professional development training sessions for its staff and those from other Iranian schools in Dubai.

## 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	160	25%
	Last year	The school was not inspected in 2010-2011	
Teachers	37		58%
Students	19		11%

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

A minority of parents, students and a majority of teachers responded to the survey. Almost all parents were positive about the educational experience provided by the school. They felt that children enjoyed learning and made progress, particularly in mathematics; a view reinforced by most of the teachers and students. Students, in the additional comments, praised the skills of their teachers and considered homework to be a fair and appropriate. A few parents had unease about the effectiveness of procedures to prevent bullying, pupils' safety on the buses, and the range of extra-curricular activities. However, such issues were not raised by teachers or students. Indeed, a majority referred to good relationships between students and teachers as a key strength of the school. Concerns expressed by a few teachers were the lack of space as the student roll increased and length of the school day for younger students. More representation and responsibility in the life of the school was the key issue of concern for a few students.

## 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.

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## 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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