

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai Modern Education School

Report published in April 2013

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي
Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai Modern Education School

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Location | Al Mizhar |
| Type of school | Private |
| Website | www.dmeschools.com |
| Telephone | 04-288-5115 |
| Address | P.O. Box 61720, Dubai |
| Principal | Dr. Farouq Ghanem |
| Curriculum | US/MoE |
| Gender of students | Boys and Girls |
| Age / Grades | 3-18 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12 |
| Attendance | Acceptable |
| Number of students on roll | 2,433 |
| Largest nationality group of Students | Emirati |
| Number of Emirati students | 1,785 (74%) |
| Date of the inspection | 3rd to 7th February 2013 |

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| The context of the school | 3 |
| Overall school performance 2012-2013..... | 3 |
| Key strengths..... | 4 |
| Recommendations..... | 4 |
| Progress since the last inspection | 5 |
| Trend of overall performance..... | 5 |
| How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects? | 6 |
| US curriculum section..... | 6 |
| MOE curriculum section | 7 |
| How good is the students' personal and social development? | 8 |
| US curriculum section..... | 8 |
| How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? | 9 |
| US curriculum section..... | 9 |
| MOE curriculum section | 9 |
| How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?..... | 10 |
| US curriculum section..... | 10 |
| How well does the school protect and support students? | 10 |
| US curriculum section..... | 10 |
| How good are the leadership and management of the school? | 11 |
| US curriculum section..... | 12 |
| MoE curriculum section | 13 |
| How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs? | 16 |
| What are the views of parents, teachers and students? | 18 |
| What happens next?..... | 19 |
| How to contact us | 19 |

The context of the school

Dubai Modern Education School is located in Al Mizhar. It is a private school which provides education for boys and girls from three to 18 years of age. At the time of the inspection, there were 2,433 students on roll. Emirati students comprised almost three-quarters of the school population. The school had identified 126 students who had special educational needs.

The school had two distinct sections. In one, students followed a curriculum loosely based on US standards for English, mathematics and science. Other subjects in this section followed the Ministry of Education (MoE) or other guidelines. Classes in the US section were organised into Kindergarten, elementary school from Grades 1 to 5, middle school from Grades 6 to 8, and high school from Grades 9 to 12. Roughly two-thirds of the students were in the US section. In the other section, which followed the MoE curriculum, classes were organised as follows: Cycle 1 from Grades 1 to 5, Cycle 2 from Grades 6 to 9, and Cycle 3 from Grades 10 to 12.

In the absence of the Principal through illness, a new Vice-Principal who was in her first year was leading the school. The school had 187 teachers, almost all of whom were appropriately qualified in their subjects. Around 30 per cent of teachers were in their first year in the school, mainly in the Kindergarten, English, mathematics or science. There were 16 Kindergarten teaching assistants.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The good attainment of students studying Arabic as an additional language in the US section;
- The well-developed knowledge and appreciation of Islamic values throughout the school;
- Successful support for children in the Kindergarten and the resultant good behaviour of the children in this phase of the school.

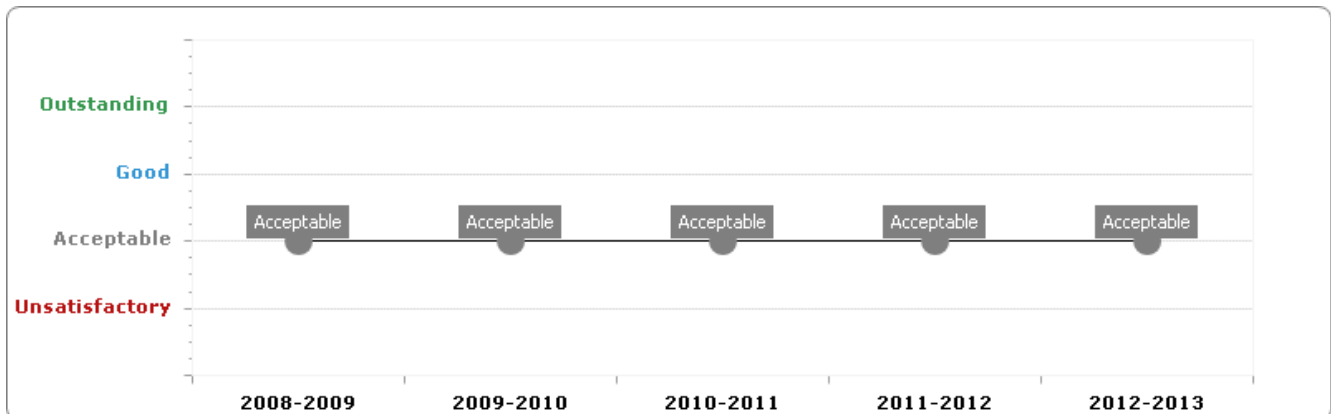
Recommendations

- Improve students' progress and attainment in both sections across all phases, particularly in elementary mathematics in the US section, and in science across the whole school;
- Encourage students, particularly boys, to improve their commitment to learning, to take more responsibility for being punctual and to show initiative and creativity;
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by encouraging students to discuss and investigate more, and providing more challenging problems for them to tackle;
- Assess students' knowledge, understanding and skills in better ways, so that teachers can match tasks to the learning needs of groups of students more effectively, including those with special educational needs;
- Improve aspects of health and safety, particularly the maintenance of safety equipment and the arrangements for bus transport and private car pick-ups and drop-offs;
- Ensure that more teachers are involved in gathering and analysing information about the school's work, including assessment data, so that all can target improvement on the key priorities.

Progress since the last inspection

- Students' progress and attainment remained broadly the same as in the previous inspection;
- There were signs of some improvements in teaching and learning. Overall, the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons remained high, particularly in the US section and in mathematics and science across both sections. Students continued to have insufficient opportunities for enquiry and research. Teachers had not improved their use of assessment data to match tasks and activities to the needs of different groups of students;
- The new Vice-Principal and some new staff at middle levels were starting have a positive impact on leadership and management. Much remained to be done, particularly to improve self-evaluation processes and ensure better outcomes for students;
- There had been slight improvement in the identification of students with special educational needs, but the quality of support and provision for these students remained low;
- The school had ensured that arrangements for learners of Arabic as an additional language were compliant with MoE requirements.

Trend of overall performance



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

US curriculum section

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

[Read paragraph](#)

MOE curriculum section

| | Cycle1 | Cycle2 | Cycle3 |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Islamic Education | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as an additional language | | | |
| 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 | Acceptable |
| Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Science | | | |
| Attainment | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Progress | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

US curriculum section

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

MOE curriculum section

| | Cycle1 | Cycle2 | Cycle3 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Attitudes and behaviour | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness | Good | Good | Good |
| Community and environmental responsibility | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

US curriculum section

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

MOE curriculum section

| | Cycle1 | Cycle2 | Cycle3 |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Teaching for effective learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Quality of students' learning | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Assessment | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

US curriculum section

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum quality | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

MOE curriculum section

| | Cycle1 | Cycle2 | Cycle3 |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum quality | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

US curriculum section

| | KG | Elementary | Middle | High |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Health and Safety | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Quality of Support | Good | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

MOE curriculum section

| Health and Safety | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Quality of Support | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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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 | Acceptable |
| Management, including staffing, facilities and resources | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

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

US curriculum section

Attainment was acceptable overall. It was good in Arabic as an additional language but unsatisfactory in mathematics in the elementary phase and science in the elementary, middle and high school phases. In Islamic Education, most students had an appropriate knowledge of key principles. In Arabic as a first language, most students could understand age-appropriate texts. A majority of girls in the upper grades were able to read confidently and fluently. Writing skills were less well developed. Most of the students of Arabic as an additional language had good listening and reading skills. They could express ideas well orally and in short pieces of writing, especially in upper grades. Extended writing skills were not good. In English, most children in the Kindergarten had appropriate speaking and listening skills. At the other phases, reading and speaking skills were relatively well developed. At all phases, students' abilities to write for different purposes were limited, particularly the boys'. In mathematics, the attainment of girls was better than that of boys. At all phases, and particularly in the elementary phase, a significant minority of students were weak when applying their mathematics skills to real-life problems. In science, children in Kindergarten had learned basic scientific concepts. In other phases, students' scientific knowledge was better than their practical skills.

Progress was acceptable in most aspects. It was good in middle school Arabic as an additional language but unsatisfactory in mathematics in the elementary school phase and in science in the elementary, middle and high school phases. In Islamic Education, most students made appropriate progress in understanding the verses of The Holy Qur'an that they studied. They made less progress developing a deep level of understanding of Islamic values and awareness of how these values related to their own lives. In Arabic as a first language, girls made better progress than boys. In Arabic as an additional language, a majority of the small number of students was making particularly good progress, for example in extended reading tasks. In English, Kindergarten children made rapid progress in recognising the sounds which letters made. At the other phases, most students made appropriate progress. Few went beyond expectations and many, by the end of the high school phase, did not reach their full potential. In mathematics, progress was stronger in lessons which focused on understanding rather than factual recall. Lack of appropriately different tasks slowed the progress of students, particularly the more able, and notably in the elementary phase. In science, the progress of children in the Kindergarten was closely linked to the development of their English language skills. In other phases, progress was limited by the students' inability to read and understand all of the textbook content, which often had too high a language level.

MoE curriculum section

Attainment was acceptable, apart from science in Cycles 1, 2 and 3, where it was unsatisfactory. The key features of attainment in this section were broadly as outlined above for the US section. The main difference in attainment between the two sections was that mathematics attainment at Cycle 1 in the MoE section was acceptable, while attainment in the elementary phase in the US section was unsatisfactory. This was as a result of, among other things, too much unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics at the elementary phase in the US section.

Progress was acceptable in all subjects, except science in Cycles 1, 2 and 3, where it was unsatisfactory. Progress in mathematics at Cycle 1 was acceptable, in contrast to the elementary phase in the US section, where it was unsatisfactory. This difference was related to the quality of teaching and learning in both phases. In science, in the MoE section, progress was limited by the lack of development of practical skills and links to real-life contexts.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were acceptable in both sections of the school, and good in Kindergarten. Girls' behaviour was better than that of the boys, especially in the middle grades. All students were respectful of their teachers and other adults, while almost all were respectful of other students. Students participated well in physical education, but some chose unhealthy food from the school canteen. Attendance over the last full term was good in the US curriculum section but acceptable in the MOE section. Punctual arrival to school was a challenge for a significant minority of families, and late-arriving students disrupted the beginning of school each morning. Students demonstrated a clear knowledge of Islamic values. Their understanding of the relevance and impact of these values on their lives was less well developed. They appreciated the heritage and culture of the UAE that influenced life in Dubai. Students had a good appreciation of their own culture and, to a lesser extent, of a range of other cultures. Generally, students saw themselves as part of the school community. A few had student council responsibilities, and a number participated in academic and sports competitions. Almost all younger students were aware of the importance of working hard. All girls in both sections of the school were conscientious. The work ethic of many older boys, in both sections, was weak. Some students were involved in projects for recycling and looking after the environment. Overall, however, awareness of environmental issues was not strong. Older girls were involved in community initiatives, including energy conservation and the promotion of phone-free driving locally.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable across all phases in the school. There was a significant minority of unsatisfactory lessons. In the Kindergarten, only a few lessons were unsatisfactory. While the quality of teaching in the elementary phase in the US section was acceptable overall, it was unsatisfactory in mathematics. There was significant variation in the quality of teaching at this phase in the US section. Teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to good. The quality of teaching in the MoE section in the corresponding Cycle 1 was less variable. It was more uniformly acceptable, with fewer lessons that were unsatisfactory or good. The quality of teaching in the middle and high school phases in the US section was broadly comparable to the quality of teaching in the corresponding Cycles 2 and 3 in the MoE section. The quality of teaching was slightly better in the high school in the US section than in Cycle 3 in the MoE section. Teachers' subject knowledge was secure. In the better lessons, teachers employed effective questioning techniques to check students' prior knowledge and to encourage deeper reflection. They provided time for plenary sessions at the end of lessons to review learning and highlight the next steps in learning. In the weaker lessons, teachers showed a lack of understanding of how students learn effectively. These lessons were poorly planned and were overly dependent upon textbooks. There was too much teacher talk and insufficient active participation by the students. Teachers did not match tasks to the learning needs of all groups of students. Across the school, teachers did not provide sufficient opportunities for students to develop higher-order thinking and investigational skills.

Learning was acceptable across all phases in the school. The quality of learning was similar between the US and MoE sections. The quality of learning in the MoE section tended to be more consistently acceptable than in the US section. In the US section, there was more variability, with a greater proportion of unsatisfactory or good learning. Students had positive approaches to their learning, particularly in the girls' classes. Most students were keen to answer their teachers' questions. They maintained high levels of concentration, even during over-lengthy presentations from their teachers. Students related positively to their peers and they worked constructively in groups. However, the majority of students were overly reliant on teachers' support. As a result, they lacked the independence required to promote and direct their own learning. Students' critical thinking skills were weak. Teachers did not ensure that they had an appropriate understanding of the ideas and concepts underpinning facts.

Teachers in the Kindergarten had well-established systems to assess children's basic skills when they began school. They subsequently recorded each child's progress regularly. In other phases and cycles, the arrangements to record and evaluate students' progress and attainment were insufficient. Teachers of English had recently begun to implement systems for tracking students' progress. Overall, little reliable information was gathered in order to evaluate the progress of individual students or to identify patterns of

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

learning among larger groups. When internal assessments were carried out, they lacked rigour. They did not provide meaningful data to compare the performance of students against international standards. Teachers did not use assessment information consistently to identify shortcomings in teaching and learning. Teachers' ongoing assessments were often superficial and did not provide sufficient guidance to students on how they could improve. Teachers did not consistently encourage students to evaluate their own work and that of others. They regularly missed opportunities to discuss with their students the progress being made in their lessons.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable across the school. The most significant difference between the US and MoE sections was the teaching of mathematics and science in English in the US section. The Kindergarten curriculum was more stimulating than in the other phases. Most students had opportunities for social, arts and physical education in addition to the five key subjects. There was no choice, however, and all students studied the same subjects in every grade. Older students studied more sciences but did not study art. The progression of content in the curriculum met the needs of most, but not all students. The more able students were frequently under-challenged by the work they were asked to do. In some cases, there was insufficient planned progression from one year to the next. The textbooks used in the US section of the school were often inappropriate for students learning English as an additional language, as the level of English in them was too difficult. The time allocated to Islamic Education in both sections each week exceeded the MoE requirements. A small number of students were hindered by being placed in the wrong classes. For example, students with little experience of Arabic were taught as if they were native speakers, and non-Muslim students studied Islamic Education. The science curriculum lacked sufficient opportunities for students to develop experimental skills and thus fully understand scientific method. Co-curricular activities were limited in scope and number, as were enrichment opportunities. Competitions in and outside the school enriched the curriculum for a few students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety arrangements were acceptable. The school site was secure in almost all areas. Senior administrative staff members addressed issues that were brought to their attention during the inspection. The buildings were kept clean. Senior leaders were aware that there were uneven surfaces in the outdoor play and physical education areas. Some ramps were too steep to enable safe access for wheelchair users. The school reported that fire evacuation arrangements had been approved by Civil Defence authorities. Supervision was effective in the school but less so on the buses. Record keeping and storage systems were good in the school clinic. Safety equipment was not always maintained correctly. Healthy living was promoted, but a few unhealthy options were available for purchase in the canteen. Child protection arrangements continued to be informal and not documented.

Relationships between staff members and most students were good. The management of attendance was acceptable overall, and slightly better in the Kindergarten than other phases. Efforts to promote punctuality were unsuccessful, although systems were more effective in the Kindergarten, where the staff had worked with parents more closely than in other phases to reduce lateness. Advice and support were acceptable overall. Some guidance was offered to older students on suitable employment opportunities and higher education placements. Most Kindergarten children received good care and guidance to support their individual development and learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

Specialist staff members had developed systems which helped teachers to identify students with special educational needs. Identification had included students with learning difficulties in reading and practical co-ordination. In the Kindergarten, the baseline assessment had been used effectively to identify children with a special educational need. Parents were supportive and there was good liaison between them and the Kindergarten. However, overall support for students with special education needs was an important weakness. The curriculum was not adapted appropriately for these students and teachers lacked specific training. In the Kindergarten it was better and class teachers and their assistants provided good support.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was acceptable. In the absence of the Principal due to illness, the owners had appointed a new Vice-Principal to lead the school. Since starting at the beginning of the school year, she had worked with some success to establish a clear vision for the school. She wanted teachers to make students more active when learning and aim for higher levels of achievement. She had carried out a series of helpful meetings with groups of teachers to explain these aims and do some training. The Vice-Principal was supported by a range of leaders at middle levels. Some had a good capacity for improving their areas of responsibility, but this skill was not consistent. There was no leader supporting the Vice-Principal by overseeing work in the US section or the MoE section, and this hindered the school's overall capacity for improvement.

The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning was unsatisfactory. Leaders carried out a range of activities but did not analyse the information gathered sufficiently well to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The assessment data gathered was unreliable. It could not be used to identify good aspects of teaching and aspects in need of improvement. The Vice-Principal had led some helpful professional development activities for teachers. Much remained to be done to ensure more consistency in the quality of lessons.

The school's partnership with parents and the community was acceptable. Parents could express their views through the parents' council. They were rarely involved in contributing to assemblies or lessons. The school did not work with parents enough to ensure that they brought their children to school on time each morning. The school communicated with parents through a website and written reports on their children's progress. These reports did not set out clearly students' next steps in learning. There was a wide range of links with organisations in the community, mainly through visitors to the school.

Governance was acceptable. Parents, staff and students were represented on the governing body. Governors had supported the school in a range of ways, including improving the buildings in response to parents' views. They had ensured that aspects of the curriculum conformed to MoE guidelines. However, their advice, support and accountability had not been sufficient to raise attainment and improve the quality of teaching. They had not ensured full attention to health and safety issues.

Management was acceptable. The day-to-day life of the school proceeded smoothly once students had arrived to classes. Management of punctuality was unsatisfactory. There were sufficient numbers of teachers, and almost all had appropriate qualifications in their subjects. A significant minority of teachers in both sections did not understand the requirements for modern education. The premises were good. Resources were not good enough in several subjects, and there was little computer equipment for students to use for investigation, research and independent learning.

[View judgements](#)

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

| Responses to the surveys | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|------------|
| Responses received | Number | | Percentage |
| Parents | This year | 225 | 16% |
| | Last year | 85 | 12% |
| Teachers | 135 | | 81% |
| Students | 554 | | 98% |

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

Almost all senior students and most teachers responded to their surveys. Around one-sixth of parents did so. The parents who responded had positive views on most aspects of the school's work. These aspects included the quality of teaching and learning and the progress being made by their children in key subjects. Most who responded felt that their children enjoyed school life and were treated fairly. They thought that parents' meetings and reports on their children's progress were regular and helpful. They were satisfied with the overall quality of education. In general, the views of teachers were significantly more positive than the views of parents or students. For example, only a majority of parents and students thought that the school dealt well with bullying, while almost all teachers thought so. Only around half of parents, students and teachers thought that they were involved in decision-making.

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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