

INSPECTION REPORT

Gulf Model School

Report published in February 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Gulf Model School

Location	Al Muhaisnah
Type of school	Private
Website	None available
Telephone	04-2544222
Address	PO Box 13683, Muhaisnah 4, Dubai.
Principal	Molly Rajan
Curriculum	Indian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1,954
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 17th to Thursday 20th October 2011

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The context of the school

Gulf Model School is situated in Al Muhaisnah 4. It opened 30 years ago and, at the time of the inspection, there were 1,954 students on roll, aged three to 18 years.

The school followed the Indian Kerala Board and Central Board of School Education (CBSE) curricula. There were 80 full- and part-time teachers, including the Principal and senior leadership team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications.

Students were grouped into 82 classes with 12 at Kindergarten, 47 in the primary phase and 23 in the secondary phase. There were no Emirati students in the school. Five different nationalities were represented among the student population. No students had been identified by the school as having some form of special educational needs or social and emotional problems.

At the time of the inspection, the Principal was absent, due to illness. The school was being managed by the Vice-Principal.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The Gulf Model School provided an acceptable quality of education. It had some good features, which included students' attitudes, behaviour and the school's partnership with parents. Attainment and progress were acceptable across all the main subject areas from Kindergarten to the secondary phase, with the exception of science in the Kindergarten. The quality of teaching, students' learning and the curriculum were acceptable in all phases. Assessment was unsatisfactory across the school. Support and protection for students was acceptable. Leadership, self-evaluation, improvement planning and governance were all unsatisfactory. Management, including staffing, facilities and resources, was acceptable. The school had not identified those students with special educational needs and, as a result, their needs not being addressed adequately.

The school had made very little progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Steps had been taken towards compliance with the requirements of the Ministry of Education with regard to Islamic Education and Arabic provision, but it was still not compliant in Arabic, in Grades 1 to 3. Some improvements had been made to the curriculum. Leaders had provided a programme of continuing professional development on information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They had not developed self-evaluation procedures to ensure they understood their school accurately. Leaders did not provide appropriate vision or direction for the teaching staff. There was still no common understanding of what constituted good and outstanding teaching and learning. The school did not demonstrate a strong capacity to improve further.

Key strengths

- Students' attitudes and behaviour across the school;
- Students who were determined to achieve in their studies and to succeed.

Recommendations

- Ensure compliance with Ministry of Education requirements for Arabic in Grades 1 to 3;
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all phases of the school;
- Continue to broaden and enrich the curriculum, especially in Kindergarten;
- Identify all students with special educational needs, including the gifted and talented, and make arrangements to ensure that their learning needs are fully met;
- Improve self-evaluation to gain an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and then involve middle managers more fully in the improvement process.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Attainment in all key subjects at all phases was acceptable, with the exception of science in the Kindergarten where it was unsatisfactory. In Islamic Education, students displayed good knowledge about the life of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The majority of students were able to recite verses from The Holy Qur'an applying proper Tajweed. In Arabic as an additional language, students' writing skills were not well developed. In English, speaking and listening skills were relative strengths and, by the time students

reached Grade 9, a majority were able to speak with confidence and express themselves well. There were too few opportunities for students to write at length or develop their creative writing skills. In mathematics, most of the primary students understood what they were taught including, for example, how to recognise equivalent fractions, measure the perimeter of polygons and calculate the area of squares and rectangles. Secondary students were able to apply formulae in order to solve geometry problems. In science, most primary students could name the major bones in the body and were able to name and describe the different kinds of joints. Secondary students could describe the uses of solar panels as alternate and renewable sources of energy.

Progress in all subjects was acceptable in all phases except in Kindergarten science, where it was unsatisfactory. Although children's work was neat and careful, their acquisition of knowledge over time was weak because of insufficient challenge in lessons. Students with special educational needs made unsatisfactory progress, due to a lack of effective support.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good across the school. Most students were courteous and friendly towards staff, visiting adults and each other. They played sensibly at break-times and mixed well with each other. Prefects willingly took responsibility for younger students. Students showed determination in their studies and were keen to succeed. Most students made healthy food choices and had a well-developed awareness of healthy life styles. Students' understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture were acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the primary, middle and secondary

phases. Most students knew about the pillars of Islam and the importance of fasting. They talked knowledgeably about feasts, traditions and local folklore. All students appreciated the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and had friends from many backgrounds and faiths. Civic, economic and environmental understanding was acceptable across the school. Older students particularly had perceptive insights into the reasons for Dubai's economic success.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

The quality of teaching for effective learning was acceptable at all stages. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and were able to share it at suitable levels with their students. However, some teachers were not secure in understanding how young people learned. In the best lessons, teachers structured discussions which encouraged students to think critically. They had high expectations and set challenging tasks, whilst ensuring most students were supported through good classroom management. Only a minority of teachers recognised that different groups and individuals had different learning needs. In too many lessons teachers did not adapt their methods or resources to address the needs of different students. In one successful science lesson, the students did independent research to prepare presentations outlining the advantages and disadvantages of plastics. The students enjoyed the ensuing debate and gained much from all the knowledge researched and shared. A significant proportion of lessons had a limited range of activities to suit the needs of different types of learners and individual students with specific learning needs were not identified or supported. Too many lessons did not relate the subject studied to everyday life. Teaching in other subjects including art, physical education, dance, accounting and economics 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. It was better in the upper school. Learning was good in art, for example, where some outstanding examples of paintings, designs and calligraphy were seen. Most of the students were keen to learn and they enjoyed the opportunities to discuss topics. For example, Grade 6 students talked about Shakespeare's poem 'Seven Ages' in the context of modern society. There were insufficient opportunities to learn through practical work in science or to develop skills in ICT for independent research.

Assessment across the school was unsatisfactory, although there were some instances of appropriate assessment strategies built into lessons seen in the secondary school. Generally, assessment was too sporadic and informal. Teachers used questions to check factual knowledge and sometimes understanding, but did not lead their students towards improvement through constructive feedback. Students' work was seldom marked and did not carry any comments which would show them how to improve. Records of tests were kept and teachers used them to group students, but insufficient effort was made to enhance the learning of those groups during lessons. The standard correction scheme to assess students' work was not applied consistently in all classes.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was acceptable across all phases of the school. The time given to Arabic instruction in Grades 1 to 3 did not meet Ministry of Education requirements. All students sat for the CBSE examinations in Grades 10 and 12. In response to the previous inspection report, elective course options had been made available to students in Grades 6 to 10, which included yoga, dance, first aid, music and art. However, in most classes in the Kindergarten, primary and middle phases the curriculum was not sufficiently enhanced to enrich students' learning. Curriculum review was conducted and supervisors reported changes in all subject areas since the previous inspection. Transition points were addressed within the CBSE materials. Although some field trips and activities were provided, enrichment opportunities were insufficient and there were too few cross-curricular links throughout the four phases.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were acceptable in all phases. All staff members took their duty of care seriously. Most children felt safe and secure in the school. A few students reported that this was not always the case. Arrangements for the health of the students were effective and monitored by the medical staff. Medicines and students' personal records were kept securely. Most teachers were aware of any special medical needs of particular students. Fire drills were carried out at appropriate intervals. Healthy eating and healthy lifestyles were encouraged by the school. Most teachers and students were aware of the arrangements for child protection.

The quality of support for students was also acceptable. Teachers' and students' relationships were respectful and a majority of teachers were able to identify the social, physical, emotional and intellectual needs of the students in their care. Students' personal concerns were dealt with efficiently and confidentially. Guidance on subject choices for examinations and future education for older students was inconsistent, as students were too dependent upon individual teachers. Behaviour management strategies were in place but incidents were not well documented. Parents were informed, often verbally, about instances of misconduct. Attendance was recorded regularly and action was taken when students were late. The arrangements for the identification, monitoring and support for students with special educational needs were unsatisfactory.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

The leadership of the school was unsatisfactory. The Principal was absent during the inspection and the school was being managed by the Vice-Principal. Both the Principal and the Vice-Principal were committed and well-meaning but had failed to set or communicate a shared vision of the future of the school. Supervisors and heads of departments showed understanding of the general needs of the school. However, they had not been empowered to make the changes that were needed. Consequently, they did not have a significant effect upon the quality of teaching and thus students' attainment and progress. The school did not demonstrate a strong capacity to improve.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. The school did not have a realistic view of the performance of its teachers or the quality of learning in lessons. The school's action plan did not focus sufficiently on improving teaching and learning. It did not contain any details about how improvement was to be implemented or how it would be measured. Classroom observations carried out by school leaders were not used to inform self-evaluation or to improve teaching.

The school had good partnerships with parents and the community. Channels of communication were good through, for example, regular updates and parent-teachers meetings. The feedback of exam results gave parents a useful picture of their child's progress. Parents appreciated the approachability and helpfulness of teachers. Open days provided opportunities to seek parents' views, although these views did not effectively influence the school's development. Links with the local community were acceptable, but partnerships with local businesses were underdeveloped.

Governance was unsatisfactory. The owner was a regular visitor to the school. He had held meetings with parents, but there were no formal records of the outcome of those meetings. Although the owner met regularly with senior managers to discuss key aspects of the school, he had not been given an accurate picture of how the school was performing.

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Management, including staffing, facilities and resources, was acceptable. The day-to-day management of the school was effective. The school had increased the number of teachers since the last inspection but there were no teaching assistants in the lower phases of the school. There were few resources to support Islamic Education, insufficient supplies of science equipment and a limited stock of books in the library, especially for the younger students. Beyond the ICT suite, students had no access to computers to support research and learning and there was no internet access available to them.

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	298	20%
	Last year	915	62%
Teachers	28		47%
Students	207		61%

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

A minority of parents responded to the survey, two-thirds less than last year's majority response. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education available, but a few were not. Most parents agreed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects, but in Arabic as an additional language, more than a few parents indicated that progress was less than good. Senior students in this subject concurred. A few parents and students disagreed that behaviour at the school was good. More than a few parents disagreed that meetings with teachers were timely and helpful, and that they were involved in the life of the school. Most parents believed that inspection had led to improvements at the school. Almost half of the teachers responded to the survey and their views were positive on all aspects of provision. A majority of senior students responded to the survey. A few students indicated that they were instructed by the school to give only positive answers. Almost a third of students believed that there were not enough clubs and activities at the school, a view shared by more than a few parents. A few students believed that the range of subjects on offer was not wide enough. Most believed that the school prepared them well for the next stages of education but a few did not think so. A majority of students agreed that their opinions were listened to, but more than a few disagreed that their voices were heard. A majority of senior students believed that they were getting the education they expected from the school, but about one-fifth of them did not.

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

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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