

INSPECTION REPORT

Raffles World Academy

Report published in April 2013

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي
Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Raffles World Academy

Location	Umm Sequim
Type of school	Private
Website	www.rafflesis.com
Telephone	04-4271351
Address	PO Box 122900, Dubai
Principal	Julian Williams
Curriculum	UK/IB
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,672
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	139 (8%)
Date of the inspection	4th February to 7th February 2013

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The context of the school

The school was founded in 2008 and is located in Um Sequim. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,672 students on roll, four to 18 years of age, from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Students came from 85 different countries. About eight per cent were Emirati. The other nationalities included sizeable numbers of Indian, French, Russian and other European students. Almost a quarter spoke English as a first language.

The school had a mixed international curriculum. From Kindergarten to Grade 5, there was an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum following the Primary Years Programme (PYP). In the secondary phase, from Grades 6 to 8, students followed a course which led to two years of study for the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) in Grades 9 and 10. Students followed the Diploma Programme (DP) of the IB curriculum in Grades 11 and 12. The provision for Islamic Education and Arabic followed the Ministry of Education guidelines. Students sat for IGCSE exams and the IB Diploma. The school was authorised to teach the IB PYP programme in primary and the IB diploma programme in later stages of the school.

There were 138 teachers and almost all had teaching qualifications. Mainly as a result of an expanding roll, thirty per cent of teachers were new this session. This figure was forty per cent in the Kindergarten. Teachers came from a wide variety of countries, including the Indian sub-continent, the UK and other European countries, Middle East, Northern America, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. There were 30 classroom assistants. The Principal had been in post from the beginning of this session.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- The excellent relationships throughout the school community;
- The initiative and leadership of students in taking forward sustainability and community projects;
- The strong and productive links with the parents and the effective governance;
- The arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and security of students;
- The provision of highly motivated and committed staff, and the quality of resources and facilities.

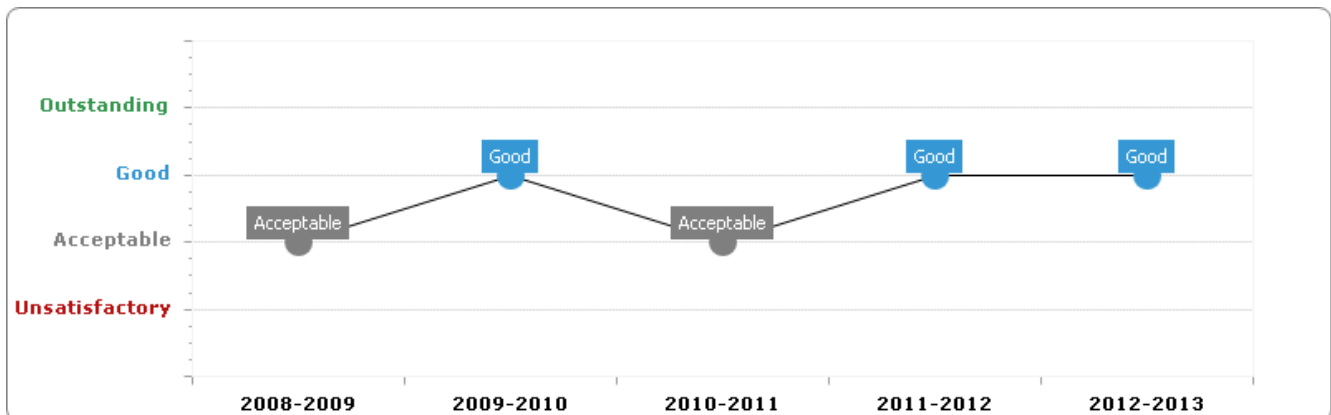
Recommendations

- Continue to improve progress and attainment in Arabic and other subjects;
- Improve the consistency of learning and teaching across the school;
- Make better use of assessment to track the progress of students at each stage across the curriculum;
- Improve the effectiveness of professional development to enhance the skills of teachers;
- Improve the rigour of self-evaluation and ensure that improvement planning has a greater impact on student outcomes.

Progress since the last inspection

- Teachers had taken some steps to improve teaching and learning in Arabic. Students' attainment had improved in Arabic in Grades 11 and 12 but, as yet, there was little impact in lower grades;
- Across the school, most teachers had improved the way they used assessment information when planning lessons;
- Improvements had taken place in the Kindergarten, where the majority of teachers were planning lessons well. Children could choose from a good range of suitable activities and learn independently;
- Through monitoring lessons and discussing their findings with teachers, managers had increased the emphasis on improving attainment.

Trend of overall performance



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment was good across most subjects. In Islamic Education, the majority of students, particularly in the upper years, were able to recite verses from The Holy Qur'an confidently. Students had a good knowledge and understanding of the life of the Prophet (PBUH), the Hadeeth, Islamic etiquette, and Islamic values. In Arabic as a first language, the attainment of senior students had improved. They had good writing and speaking skills and could initiate discussions using standard Arabic. However, in Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment was acceptable at each stage. Attainment in English was good. Reading, speaking and listening skills were well developed, even in the Foundation Stage. In secondary English, students were learning to adapt style and language appropriately for a range of forms, purposes and readers, and to harness new ideas which they expressed in coherent writing and speech. In mathematics, the attainment in Kindergarten, primary and secondary was good and, in post-16, it was outstanding. Most students in all phases enjoyed applying their mathematical knowledge to solve a range of real life problems. Attainment was good across all phases in science. Students' practical skills were good across all phases.

Progress was also good across most subjects. In all Islamic Education lessons, the majority of students were making good progress. In Arabic as a first language, students' language skills developed well at each stage. In Arabic as an additional language, students' progress was less secure as there were fewer opportunities for them to use the language in class. The majority of students who joined the school with little or no English quickly developed a good range of speaking, writing, and reading skills. In mathematics, students consolidated and progressively developed their understanding of concepts and skills of problem solving. Progress was good across all phases in science. As students moved through the school they developed an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the methods of scientific enquiry and good practical skills.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students showed good achievement and made good progress in all phases. Their achievement and progress in all subjects was in line with that of other students. Emirati students were very well integrated in the school and worked very well in groups with students of other nationalities, displaying the same very good work ethic and engagement in lessons.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

There was a strong work ethic in the school which was mirrored in students' attitudes and behaviour. As they progressed through the school, students developed a strong sense of personal responsibility. Members of the Student Council demonstrated independence of mind and the approach of this group in initiating improvements to school life was exemplary. The Anti-Bullying Committee initiated and run by a Year 11 student was a model of its kind. Year 5 students made a very positive contribution to monitoring the orderliness of other young children. Students enjoyed excellent relationships with staff and reported that they felt safe and valued. Students showed tolerance and empathy for others within their community. The importance of maintaining health and fitness were well understood, and students regularly took part in activities which promoted healthy living. Punctuality and attendance were good for all years. Students showed a mature grasp of cultural diversity and a clear understanding of how Islamic values influenced contemporary society of Dubai. Local traditions were known to students and festivals were celebrated. Many students showed initiative by taking part in local charitable events. Students had an impressive understanding of environmental sustainability; a student led Environment Team was pro-active in identifying ways to improve the school environment. Students respected Islamic values and demonstrated an understanding of its impact on the society. They respected the local traditions, and valued the achievement of Dubai.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The quality of teaching for effective learning was good in all phases. In most lessons teachers had strong subject knowledge and understood that children and students learn best when actively engaged in practical activities. They used a variety of resources and strategies and ensured time was used efficiently. Most teachers asked increasingly challenging questions to promote higher order and critical thinking. These helped students to make links with what they had already learned and to apply their learning to the real world. The best teachers knew their students' needs well and planned for them all to make progress from their starting points. However, this was inconsistent. In a minority of lessons expectations were low and teachers were not clear about what they wanted students to learn. Consequently, students made limited progress in these lessons.

The quality of students' learning was good in all phases. Almost all students embraced opportunities to learn either independently or in collaboration with their peers. They demonstrated maturity, perseverance and creativity in finding solutions to problems. They grew in confidence as they moved through the school and acquired the appropriate vocabulary to describe and explain their learning and to discuss a wide range of

topics. Almost all students could see a purpose to their learning and could relate it to their own lives. They responded well to increasingly challenging tasks. Most students could assess how well they had learned in a lesson. The majority of students were conscientious about completing homework to extend their learning.

Assessment was good in the Kindergarten, in the primary phase and at post-16 and acceptable in the secondary phase. There were consistent and regular systems for assessing students' attainment and monitoring their progress over time in primary and in each secondary subject. This provided useful guidance for teachers on how to support students' next steps in reading and writing in the primary phase. Most teachers knew their students' strengths and weaknesses in all phases and helped them to reflect on their progress. Students following the IB Diploma Programme produced their own action plans for improvement. Teachers' use of questioning was effective in checking understanding and identifying where additional support was needed. Although progress and attainment were assessed in all subjects in the secondary phase, this information was not effectively shared. Whilst verbal feedback to students was good, marking in workbooks usually lacked guidance on how to improve and was, on occasion, marked inaccurately.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum had a clear rationale, based on developing the IB learner profile, and breadth and balance across all grades. Its programmes promoted challenge, enjoyment, choice and progression. It consistently included creative, physical and practical experiences. All students had very good opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking. All students benefited from well organised arrangements which ensured their smooth transition as they moved from one phase to the next. Regular review of the curriculum had resulted in improvements to a number of subject programmes. Trans-disciplinary learning was a feature of the Kindergarten and primary school, and cross-curricular links were well developed in the secondary school. The inclusion of mother-tongue French and German in the curriculum reflected the school's willingness to take account of the views of parents and students. The curriculum was enriched by carefully planned opportunities for students to participate in local, national and international activities; to work to help others less fortunate than themselves; and to develop entrepreneurial skills. An extensive extra-curricular programme provided students with excellent opportunities to extend their learning and interests.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for health, safety and security around the school and on school transport were exemplary, as was record keeping and security of medicines and chemicals. All parts of the premises were accessible to all, very clean and maintained to an excellent standard. Students were very well supervised on the premises and buses with extensive CCTV to aid security. Healthy living was promoted systematically across the curriculum, through assemblies and by the medical staff. The school doctor agreed monthly menus with the canteen to ensure healthy food. The school had very good child protection procedures but there was a need to ensure full understanding by new staff during induction.

Excellent relationships between staff and students were features of all aspects of the life in the school. Staff recorded attendance and punctuality rigorously and early contact was made with parents if a student failed to appear without explanation. Students' academic progress across the curriculum in the secondary phase was not monitored well as assessment data was not readily available for each student across all subjects. Students were able to seek advice and support on academic or personal issues and were confident that their concerns would be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

[View judgements](#)

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

Procedures for identifying students with special educational needs were effective. Specialist staff provided good support to students, either in-class or in small withdrawal groups that enabled students to make good progress. Students' good progress was also supported by well-constructed individual learning plans that provided teachers with clear guidance on how a student's particular needs should be met in lessons.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management were good. The recently appointed Principal had taken steps to re-focus the school's vision and engage the full support of its community. Leadership was distributed well throughout the school. In addition to the Principal there was a head of primary and a head of secondary. Strong and effective leadership was also evident in middle management in both subject departments and in those who had whole school responsibilities. The leaders had the capacity to further the school's improvement.

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Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The school had systematic procedures for evaluating the quality of its work. These included lesson observation by senior and middle managers, teacher reflection on their own performance and peer observation. In some cases these procedures lacked rigour and challenge. Nevertheless, they enabled the school to identify its strengths and focus on specific areas for improvement.

Links with parents and the community were outstanding and helped to improve students' learning. The parent group organised many events and initiatives which benefitted the school community. This highly organised team had formed a focus group to work with the Arabic department. Communication between the school and parents was excellent. Reports on students' progress were regular, helpful and forward looking. Very good liaison took place between parents of children with special education needs and specialist staff and also between medical staff, parents and students. Good productive links were also formed with the local community.

The Advisory Council provided advice and guidance to the board of directors of the parent company. It has had a significant impact on the school; for example, through improvement of sports facilities. It had also supported the school's leadership by having far-reaching discussions on future strategies. The board held the Principal to account via the CEO on the performance of the school. The stakeholder representation on this council was wide, influential and had joint membership with PARIS and provided a very effective means of enabling the views of parents to be heard at board level.

All aspects of school organisation were very efficient and effective. Physical resources and staff were effectively timetabled and deployed. Recruitment processes were very effective ensuring appointment of qualified and trained staff. The effectiveness of their on-going professional development was less strong. The premises were spacious with excellent facilities for sport and all parts of the curriculum. Learning resources across the curriculum were relevant, extensive and of good quality. The library was a welcoming area well equipped with information technology resources and with an excellent range of books.

[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	558	43%
	Last year	273	27%
Teachers	125		94%
Students	139		92%

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

Overall, parents, teachers and students were satisfied with most aspects of the school. Almost all parents thought that their children were making good progress in English. Most thought good progress was being made in mathematics and science and a majority considered that good progress was being made in Islamic Education and Arabic. In all subjects, except Arabic as an additional language, most students said they were making good progress. Almost all parents felt that the quality of teaching and learning was good and that their children were encouraged to take responsibility. Most parents and teachers thought that the behaviour of students was good and that there was a good range of courses and extra-curricular activities. Most parents and students also thought that teachers treated students fairly and with respect. A few students complained about the school food. A number of parents commented on the traffic congestion outside the school. Most parents and teachers thought that the school was well led and that it delivered well on its promise.

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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