

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Rajagiri International School

Report published in January 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Rajagiri International School

Location	Al Warqa'a
Type of school	Private
Website	www.risdubai.org
Telephone	04-2800691
Address	Al Warqa'a, Dubai, UAE,
Principal	Varghese Puthusserry
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-12 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 6
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1,163
Students' nationalities	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	1st October to 4th October 2012

## Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013 .....	4
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
How good is the students' personal and social development? .....	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? .....	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students? .....	8
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....	8
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	14
What happens next?.....	15
How to contact us .....	15

## The context of the school

Rajagiri International School, located in Al Warqa'a, is a private school for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Grade 6, aged three to 12 years. The roll increased this year by just over 100 students to 1,163, partly because middle school students, in Grade 6, were enrolled for the first time. The school follows an Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum.

There are 71 full-time teachers, including the Principal, Vice-Principal and Headmistress. Almost all teachers had appropriate teaching qualifications and had engaged in recent professional development. There were 20 new staff appointed to the school this year, about 28 per cent of the total.

All students were of Indian descent. They were grouped in 18 Kindergarten, 25 primary and two middle classes, with an average class size of 26 students. A total of 35 students had been identified by the school as having some form of special educational need. All of those students received additional support from specialist counsellors.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

### Key strengths

- The good rate of progress in spoken and written English which enabled students to communicate effectively across the curriculum;
- Exemplary student behaviour showing full commitment to their learning and a pride in their school and community;
- The outstanding quality of health and safety procedures provided to all students which contributed to the schools caring, friendly atmosphere;
- The continued strong partnership with parents.

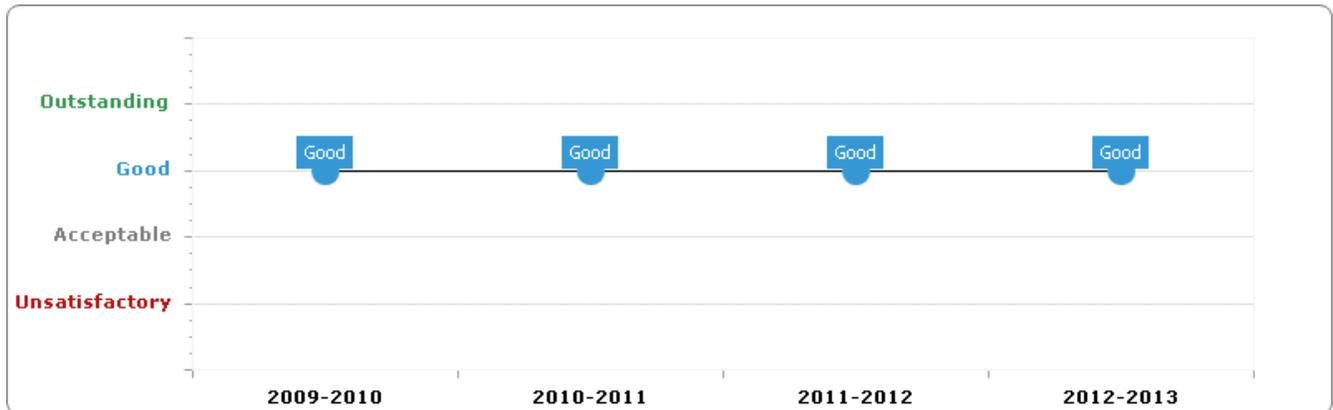
### Recommendations

- Continue to improve attainment in all key subjects across the school;
- Ensure all teachers consistently use assessment information to plan appropriate lessons so that students of all abilities make good progress from their starting points;
- Improve the quality of school self-review and improvement planning, so that initiatives are embedded consistently across the school;
- Ensure that the Governing Board is expanded to include representation from all stakeholders.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Students in the primary school had made better progress in Islamic Education;
- Grade 6 classes had been added into the school;
- The continued strong community involvement, work ethic and environmental awareness of the primary and middle school students.

## Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Primary	Middle
<b>Islamic Education</b>			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b>			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b>			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good
<b>Science</b>			
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	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	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment in all key subjects was good except in Islamic Education in middle school and in Arabic in primary and middle, where attainment was acceptable. In Islamic Education, the majority of students knew and were able to explain the Five Pillars of Islam, the principles of worship, important stories from the history of Islam, and the role of the Mosque and Hajj in a Muslim's life. Recitation skills remained below expectations and students were not always able to link what they learned to real life situations, especially in the middle school. In Arabic as an additional language, most students listened and responded well to simple questions. They were able to read the Arabic script with few pronunciation mistakes; however their writing was mainly based on copying from the textbook. In English, in Kindergarten, children had good speaking and listening skills and a thorough knowledge of letter sounds. Grade 5 spoke precisely, read accurately and had mature handwriting, but their writing lacked adventurous word choice. Grade 6 read and spoke expressively and although their writing was grammatically correct, it lacked variety of expression. In Kindergarten mathematics, most children had good number knowledge, could complete simple calculation and recognise 2-D shapes. Most primary students could calculate and solve simple word problems using well-developed number bonds and multiplication facts. They had a basic understanding of geometry. Middle school students could use formulae to calculate missing values in geometry. In science, attainment was good across all stages and students demonstrated effective skills in investigation and enquiry as well as in their factual scientific knowledge.

Students' progress in most subjects was good and had improved in primary Islamic Education since the last inspection. Most Muslim students were making evident progress in their acquisition of knowledge about Islam. Progress was acceptable in Arabic in primary and middle phases where most students developed a reasonable range of vocabulary about familiar topics; however low expectations and lack of challenge limited further progress. Progress in English in Kindergarten was outstanding but good in mathematics and science. In English, children made rapid gains in speaking and listening and word recognition. In primary and middle phases, progress in English, mathematics and science was good. In English, primary students made good progress in literal comprehension but slower progress in developing complex arguments in writing. Grade 6 students progressed well in fluent handwriting but made slower progress in writing expressively. Students with special educational needs made only acceptable progress overall, because they were not given enough individual support. However, their progress in English was good.

[View judgments](#)

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

Students' personal and social development was mostly outstanding across the school. Almost all students were confident and highly motivated learners who took great pride in their school. Positive and supportive relationships prevailed throughout the school between the students and the staff. Almost all students had a clear understanding of what constituted a healthy lifestyle. The punctuality and attendance rate was outstanding during the inspection. The students in all phases demonstrated good understanding of how Islamic values impact on the modern society of Dubai. They respected and had a strong understanding of the local traditions and heritage. Across the school, most students had a good appreciation of their own culture, the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and other cultures around the world. Students in Kindergarten had a good understanding of community and environmental issues, while those in primary and middle school were outstanding. Students in primary and middle phases were highly proactive in the life of the school. They took responsibility to raise awareness in their school and the community about the importance of the environment. The students appreciated Dubai and its quality of life. They willingly participated in community development programmes. There were instances where they brought positive changes to the lives of people less fortunate than themselves. Environmental understanding was a strong feature of the school.

[View judgements](#)

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

Teaching for effective learning was good in all phases. However, there were inconsistencies especially in the primary phase. Most teachers had strong subject knowledge and planned purposeful opportunities for practical and group work. They made good use of time. Simple but effective resources enabled students to develop new concepts through a multi-sensory experience. This was most effective in the Kindergarten. Most teachers engaged students in meaningful discussions but questions rarely promoted higher order thinking. In a minority of lessons teachers talked too much and students missed opportunities to practise what they had learnt. Students enjoyed discovering things for themselves and made good use of the Computer Room to enhance learning and research topics. However, information communication technology (ICT) was rarely used in classrooms. Teaching in art, music, physical education, ICT, swimming and library lessons was good.

The quality of students' learning was good in all phases. Almost all students were enthusiastic learners who welcomed a challenge and took responsibility for learning whenever possible. They could work independently and in groups and enjoyed sharing their ideas with classmates and supporting each other's learning. In a significant number of lessons, students were given far too much help and became over-reliant on teachers. Consequently, the opportunities for independent research and critical thinking were

limited. In some lessons, students received verbal feedback on their progress informing them of their strengths and areas for improvement, but this was variable. Most students used their existing knowledge to extend their learning and could relate what they had learnt to the real world and their own lives.

Assessment was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the primary and middle phases. Systems were in place to measure attainment and progress but this data did not provide reliable benchmarks against international standards. In Kindergarten, teachers used their observations of children at work and play to plan for continuous progress. This was less effective in other phases especially where teachers who were new to the school were not familiar with the range of students' abilities. Skilled teachers used effective questioning during lessons to check understanding and reinforce learning. They monitored students' work and at the end of lessons assessed what the students had learnt. Written feedback in books, however, was not always helpful in providing students with advice and guidance on how to improve their work.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was outstanding in Kindergarten and good in all other phases. In Kindergarten, the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) curricula had been successfully modified and reviewed to provide a good platform for basic skills. Transition arrangements were mostly effective but more was needed to ensure a seamless transition between Grades 5 and 6. The Kindergarten curriculum provided a wide range of learning opportunities across all learning areas and enabled students of different abilities to make at least good progress. The primary and Grade 6 curriculum catered well for the needs of average ability pupils but did not provide enough challenge for those with higher ability. The school had improved the curricula for Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language. More work was needed to ensure that the changes impacted on students' learning, particularly in Arabic. There was a good range of additional activities within the school day and through visits which broadened students' experience and social awareness.

[View judgements](#)

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

Health and safety were outstanding across the school. All staff demonstrated a high level of caring. The clinic was well staffed with a full-time doctor and two full-time nurses. All medications and detailed records were securely stored. Bus supervisors and drivers were trained in basic first aid and accompanied the children to and from school. Building maintenance was exemplary and fire evacuation procedures were conducted and recorded in compliance with Dubai Municipal Authority guidelines. Pool, water tank and pest control contracts were in place and the building was kept clean, safe and secure with frequent checks by staff and governors.

The school's quality of support was good. Relationships between staff and students were very positive with only a few incidents of student misbehaviour noted during the inspection. Policies for behaviour management, anti-bullying, child protection and complaints procedures were clearly stated and shared with all staff. Student attendance was well monitored and issues of punctuality were responded to in an appropriate manner. The school provided a high quality of personal support and guidance for students. Provisions for healthy living were evident in the canteen offerings and the large number of assembly programs and activities available to the students.

[View judgements](#)

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

In response to the recommendation from the previous inspection, the school had reviewed and implemented improved identification procedures. One staff member had singular responsibility for co-ordination of internal and external evaluations and worked collaboratively with counsellors, teaching staff and parents. Accurate documentation was present for each child and developed with the counsellors and teachers to enable effective implementation. The process worked most effectively in the Kindergarten classrooms where additional staff ensured that tasks were well matched to the learning needs of the students. Additional focus on implementation was needed to ensure that all teachers received appropriate training and provide necessary accommodations.

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

Leadership was good. The experienced Principal and senior management team had developed a clear vision for the future. Direction was being clarified through a set of expressed educational aims and objectives. This included future emphasis on the development of student skills and understanding. Leadership was efficiently delegated and organised across all subjects and phases. Senior management, heads of department and leaders of groups had been partially successful in maintaining educational outcomes and, in a few areas, such as Islamic Education, had led to improvement. Leaders demonstrated the capacity to improve the school further.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Regular self-evaluation resulted in senior leaders being aware of a number of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The evaluation of teaching was systematic and well-focused, although it was not yet sufficiently linked to the learning outcomes of students. Improvement plans, based on the previous year's inspection recommendations lacked detail. As a result the school had made only limited progress in addressing these. Improvements in the identification of students with special educational needs and improvements in Islamic Education were balanced by insufficient progress in the provision of more detailed feedback to students about their learning and necessary next steps.

The school's partnership with parents and community was outstanding. The parents association was active and had a wide representation of parents from every phase. They were very supportive of the school; in particular of the strong levels of communication, accessibility of staff and promptness of response to questions or concerns. Most Kindergarten parents were appreciative of the clear information about their children's progress through regular school reports. Other phases received less information because those reports provided grades but no comments. Good community links included participation in a range of environmental projects, while links with local businesses and other schools were developing.

Governance of the school was acceptable. It continued to be restrictive in its representation. It lacked input from parents and the wider educative and local communities. The two members of the board had high profiles in the school and supported the schools daily operational management, but they had a limited role in holding the school to account.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. Most teachers had suitable qualifications. Almost a third had been in the school for less than a year. Kindergarten classes were well supported by teaching assistants. Classrooms were clean, safe and secure and supplemented with a good range of specialist facilities, such as computer and audio visual rooms, swimming pools, a refurbished library and a new sports ground with synthetic turf. A few classrooms had interactive white boards; however most classrooms did not have computers to support student research and independent study.

## 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	608	62%
	Last year	510	66%
Teachers	20		28%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

Provide a brief overview of the main views of stakeholders as indicated in the survey returns.

A majority of parents completed this year's survey, a similar proportion to last year. Overall they were positive about almost all aspects of the schools work. Parents identified Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language as key subjects where their children's progress was less than expected. Almost all parents were satisfied with the overall quality of education provided by the school. Almost all felt that teaching and learning were good. All parents thought that students with a special educational need received good support and that most teachers made sure their child knew how to improve. A minority of teachers completed the survey. They were positive about the school and were happy to work there. They found the welcoming school ambiance to be encouraging.

## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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