

# Rajagiri International School Inspection Report

Pre-Primary to Primary

Report Issued February 2011

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## Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report

**Outstanding** – exceptionally high quality of performance or practice.

**Good** – the expected level of quality for every school in Dubai.

**Acceptable** – the minimum level of acceptability required for Dubai. All key aspects of performance and practice in every school should meet or exceed this level.

**Unsatisfactory** – quality not yet at the level acceptable for schools in Dubai. Schools will be expected to take urgent measures to improve the quality of any aspect of their performance or practice that is judged at this level.

Rajagiri International School was inspected in October 2010 as part of the regular inspection of all schools in Dubai. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated students' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on students' progress in Islamic Education (for Muslim students), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

### Basic information about the school

Located in Al Warqaa, Rajagiri International School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Pre-Primary to Primary, aged three to nine years. The school follows a CBSE curriculum. At the time of the inspection there were 805 students on roll. Attendance was good.

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents. There was a very high level of satisfaction from parents who responded to the questionnaire. A high number of returns were received. Almost all parents agreed that the school communicated regularly and effectively. Both senior staff and teachers were accessible and resolved difficulties in a timely manner. Almost all parents felt that the amount of homework allocated was appropriate and they stated that the parent-teacher meetings were regular and informative. A few parents expressed concern regarding the shortage of outdoor sports facilities in the school and were keen to know more about the work and decisions of school governors, particularly with regard to future arrangements for students when they reached Grade 5.

## How well does the school perform overall?

The school continued to provide a good quality of education, overall. The school performed effectively in almost all aspects of its work. The previous inspection report had identified four areas for improvement and there had been good progress in addressing the recommendations.

Students' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were good or better. There were important strengths in students' skills across all aspects of English. Although students were, overall, making better progress in Islamic Education and Arabic than had been the case in the last inspection, attainment remained acceptable. The quality of teaching for effective learning and school leadership were good. The school demonstrated a strong capacity for continued improvement.

## Key features of the school

- Students in the school demonstrated outstanding attitudes and behaviour and this contributed to the positive climate for learning in the school;
- Students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in the primary school were outstanding;
- The school had made good progress in addressing most of the recommendations from the last inspection;
- The wide range of co-curricular provision provided a good breadth of learning experiences for all students;
- The arrangements to ensure students' care and welfare were effective;
- There remained important weaknesses in the quality of teaching for effective learning in Islamic Education and in Arabic and, consequently, attainment in these subjects required improvement;
- The leadership team demonstrated a good capacity to manage and implement future improvement.

## Recommendations

- Raise attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Improve the information and communications technology (ICT) facilities in classes and ensure that students of all ages have more regular opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum;
- Continue to improve provision for students with special educational needs;
- Provide more regular opportunities in lessons for students to develop their higher order and critical thinking skills;
- Further develop assessment to provide students with more regular and detailed feedback about their work and what they need to do to improve.

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

Students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education were acceptable. Students were able to name the five pillars of Islam and demonstrated an age-appropriate understanding of the important events in the life of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Most students were able to memorise the Hadiths that were related to certain customs and practices including, for example, eating, greeting and visiting homes. Older students demonstrated good recitation skills.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were acceptable. In the lower grades students were able to recognise and correctly pronounce letters of the alphabet. In the later stages, a majority of students could read, use and comprehend up to ten sentences. Most students made good progress in developing their handwriting skills. However, the majority of students made unsatisfactory progress in independent writing. Students in Grade 4 made good progress in listening, speaking and certain aspects of reading. Overall, levels of attainment were variable and students' good progress following KG2 was not maintained across all aspects of the Arabic language.

In pre-primary, attainment in English was good and progress was outstanding. In the primary phase, attainment and progress were outstanding. In Kindergarten, children demonstrated speaking, listening and reading skills above expected levels. By the end of the primary phase, students achieved levels which were well above average. Students were articulate and showed high levels of confidence and fluency while using a well-developed vocabulary. Reading and listening skills were very well developed; both younger and older students read aloud with expression and fluency. Handwriting and the students' presentation of their work were very good and short comprehension exercises were completed accurately. At the beginning of Kindergarten 2, children were able to write original sentences independently. Primary aged students showed creativity in personal writing with effective use of vocabulary and grammar. Students had a good knowledge of poetry and of different genres in writing.

Children's attainment in mathematics and their progress in pre-primary were good. Attainment and progress in Grades 1 to 4 was outstanding. Children in Kindergarten demonstrated good numeracy skills. They could calculate differences between two numbers and write missing numerals. Kindergarten children could solve number problems, count backwards and forwards and add numbers. Almost all students in the pre-primary phase showed good progress from their initial starting points. Grade 1 students could add two-digit numbers accurately and quickly. By Grade 3 students could study pictographs and represent them numerically. Grade 4 students were able to investigate shapes to calculate area. Assessment information from Grades 1 to 4 indicated that most students consistently made significant gains in knowledge, skills, understanding and could apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts.

Attainment and progress in science were good throughout the school. Children in Kindergarten demonstrated good factual knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. For example, the majority of children could identify healthy foods and the differences between seasons. Grade 1 students knew the properties of air and were able to communicate their understanding of the scientific fact that air occupies space. By Grade 4 students were able to use their scientific knowledge and understanding well and could accurately observe and record scientific data. When testing the solubility of substances, students made records using the appropriate scientific language.

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

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding throughout the school. In all classes, students were extremely well behaved, polite and courteous. Student-teacher relationships were excellent. Most students attended school regularly and were punctual. Attendance was good.

Students' civic and Islamic understanding was good. At all stages of the school students demonstrated a good understanding of Islam, Islamic culture and local heritage. Through the well planned curriculum almost all students showed a good understanding of the UAE. Students had respect for others and demonstrated appreciation of the culture of others. They engaged in cultural activities that highlighted civic understanding, including those that developed their understanding of national education. Students understood their responsibilities as members of the wider community.

Students' economic and environment understanding was good. Students had developed good knowledge of Dubai's economic developments and recent economic changes. They were also aware of the global financial crisis and its possible impact on Dubai and their families. Students could identify how the UAE was perceived globally. They were aware of Dubai's tallest building, Burj Khalifa, and the metro. From various stages in the school, students had completed a range of environment projects and these contributed well to students' environmental awareness. Students were aware of global environment issues and they initiated different projects in school and took part in community environment activities outside of school.

### How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching for effective learning was good in both pre-primary and primary phases. Teachers planned their lessons well. The learning objectives of almost all lessons were made clear for the students, although a few lessons finished without an effective plenary. Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge was strong. Teachers created successful working relationships with their students and used questioning techniques that invited students to think critically. Teachers had high expectations of students' handwriting and the presentation of their work. Across the school teachers told students what they expected them to learn but, at times, they gave the students too few opportunities to learn by finding out for themselves.

As a consequence of good teaching, the quality of students' learning was good in both pre-primary and primary phases. Students enjoyed their lessons. They were motivated, showed high levels of concentration and were keen to succeed. In paired and group work, students supported one another effectively. In almost all lessons students gained new skills and knowledge. When given the opportunity to do so, students willingly contributed to lessons asking interesting questions that enhanced their learning. As they progressed through the school, they built effectively on earlier knowledge and skills becoming familiar with more advanced concepts. In most lessons, clear links were made to previous learning.

The quality of assessment was good in both phases. Work was marked regularly and teachers' record keeping was detailed. The school had well developed policies and practices to assess learning and communicated the results regularly to students and parents. Most teachers gave constructive feedback in lessons and used students' responses to check their progress. A few teachers held reviews of learning at the end of each lesson. Teachers used a good range of assessments to help check students' progress. However, they did not always use this information well when planning lessons to ensure sufficient challenge for higher achieving students. Students were not sufficiently clear about what they had to do next in order to improve.

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

Curriculum was good in the Kindergarten and the primary phase. Across all stages, the curriculum had a clear rationale and was broad and balanced. It was reviewed annually to ensure that students' needs were met. Teachers planned the curriculum referring to CBSE standards and also to the standards in other international curricula. Cross-curricular learning was most evident in the Kindergarten and primary phases. In the Kindergarten classes students learned through play and enjoyed story and activities in the rumpus rooms. In the primary phase, the curriculum was integrated with extended time allocated for reading, writing and other subjects. A wide range of co-curricular activities were available for students and these effectively enriched their learning. There was good continuity and progression across grades. An environmental group, "the green gang" was actively involved in enhancing links with the environment and the clubs involved students in community service. Specialist ICT lessons in laboratories were planned for all classes. However, there were insufficient opportunities for students to use ICT across the curriculum.

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

Health and safety arrangements in the school were good. Students stated they felt safe and staff fully understood their duty of care to ensure that secure safety procedures were in place. Safe transport arrangements were enhanced by the vigilant support of school staff. The premises were clean, hygienic, regularly checked and well maintained. Risk assessments for visits outside the school premises were rigorous and well documented. Medicines and cleaning chemicals were kept in locked areas. Medical arrangements were effective. Regular fire drills were held and equipment was checked. Staff were aware of procedures for fire drills with evacuation and assembly plans in place. The promotion of healthy living permeated the life of the school. All students knew about healthy diets and they readily made comparisons between food they should eat and those they should avoid. Although a policy existed, child protection procedures and practice required further development.

The quality of support for students was good. Effective staff-student relationships were a positive feature of the school and students knew they could approach any adult if they were worried or unhappy. Good tracking procedures were in place to support the academic and personal development of students. All teachers knew their students very well. Academic records were comprehensive, valid and current. Changes in students' well-being and personal circumstances were monitored closely and the information was used to provide necessary support. Students with special educational needs, such as those requiring greater challenge or support in their work, made good progress. However, students with specific special needs required further additional assistance. Training for staff was insufficient to equip teachers to support the small number of students with specific educational needs within the school. Rigorous records were kept regarding student attendance and punctuality and these were monitored regularly. Strategies to encourage the punctuality of certain students who were repeatedly late required further development.

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

Leadership in the school was good and senior staff demonstrated a strong capacity to secure further improvements. Roles and responsibilities were defined clearly and effective teams contributed to on-going school review and improvement. The school was very well managed and effective organisational systems meant that communication was good across the school. Although subject leaders led initiatives and managed effectively, they did not always have a sufficiently detailed or accurate view of standards.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The school had encouraged feedback on its work from a range of sources including, for example, teachers, parents and students. Senior staff and supervisors carried out lesson observations to evaluate and help improve teaching. Appropriate development priorities had been identified and effective strategies had been introduced to help the school to improve. The school had made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

Partnership with parents was good. There were effective communication systems with parents, including a monthly, positive, “sunshine” telephone call from each teacher to every parent designed to give parents an insight into their children’s experiences in school. Regular newsletters kept parents informed of class work, and homework diaries were valued by parents as a means of frequent communication. Links with the community were well established and effectively supported the curriculum. The parent’s council provided a formal communication channel to the school managers.

Governance was acceptable, although a number of improvements had taken place since the last school inspection. School governors met bi-annually and had begun a regular review of the performance of the school. They ensured that statutory requirements were met. However, the school was still not yet fully accountable to the governing body. The parent council met regularly with the school staff to share their views about the work of the school but the membership of the governing body was not fully representative of all major stakeholders.

Staffing, facilities and resources were of good quality. Most staff were well qualified. Support staff were deployed effectively. The school facilities included a number of special features including play areas for Kindergarten children, ICT laboratories and a discovery centre. Outdoor sports facilities were limited. There was insufficient ICT hardware and software in classes. This limited the opportunities for teachers to use ICT across the curriculum and restricted the potential for students to develop independent study and research skills.

## Summary of inspection judgements

In their evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school, the inspection team made judgements about the following aspects of the school's performance.

Four descriptors are: Outstanding; Good; Acceptable; Unsatisfactory.

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?		
0% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Attainment	Good	Outstanding
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Attainment	Good	Outstanding
Progress over time	Good	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good

How good is the students' personal and social development?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good

How good are teaching and learning?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good

How well does the school protect and support students?		
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary
Health and safety	Good	Good
Quality of support	Good	Good

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
	Overall
Quality of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Staffing, facilities and resources	Good

How well does the school perform overall?
Good

## Next steps

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. 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).

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae).

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