

Inspection Report



Ambassador School

2014-2015



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School information



General information

Location	Al Mankhool
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	2013
Website	www.ambassadorschool.com
Telephone	043983535
Address	41a Street, Mankhool
Principal	Naila Zaffar
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	19 th – 21 st October 2014



Students

Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	5 - 16
Grades or year groups	Grade1 - Grade10
Number of students on roll	697
Number of children in Pre-K	0
Number of Emirati students	0
Number of students with SEN	118
Largest nationality group of students	Indian



Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	60
Largest nationality group of teachers	Indian
Number of teacher assistants	12
Teacher-student ratio	1:25
Number of guidance counsellors	2
Teacher turnover	29%



Curriculum

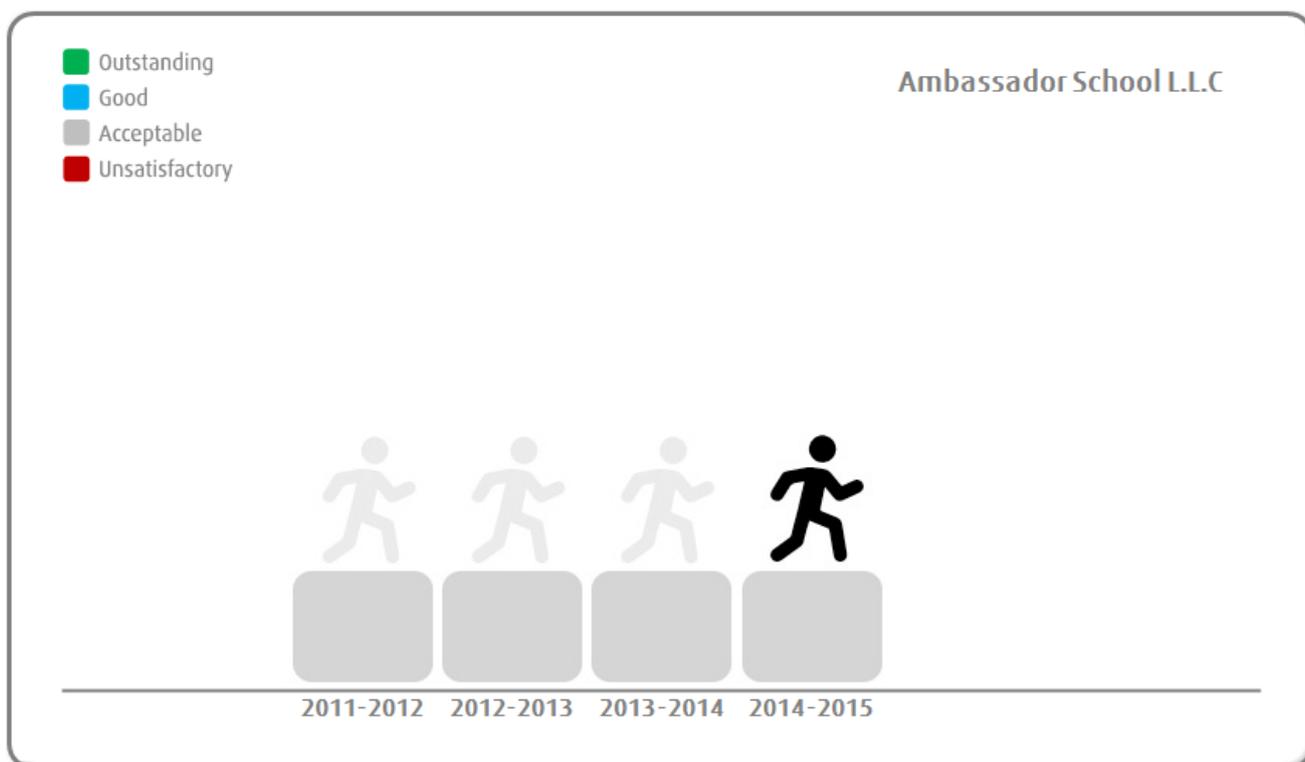
Educational Permit	Indian
Main Curriculum / Other	CISCE
Standardised tests / board exams	CISCE
Accreditation	CISCE



Dear Parents,

Ambassador School L.L.C was inspected by DSIB from 19th – 21st October 2014, and the overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **Acceptable**

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.



The inspection judgements were drawn from a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders, governors and owners are:

Strengths

- Students' enthusiasm for learning and their strong work ethic.
- Science and Islamic Education in the Primary phase were good.
- Students' good personal and social development.
- Students' good attainment of students in grades 3 to 9 in external international assessments.
- The health and safety procedures were outstanding.

Areas for improvement

- Raise attainment in Arabic as an additional language.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the primary grades.
- Improve teachers' use of assessment in lessons to ensure activities meet the needs and abilities of all students.
- Improve the support for students with special educational needs to ensure they make good progress in lessons
- Improve the curriculum so that it is more interesting and provides more challenge for students.

We warmly encourage you to read the full school inspection report.

The school is required to submit to DSIB an action plan identifying the steps they will take to address the areas for improvement. We have advised your school leaders to share this with you.

We trust that the information provided will help you understand, and encourages you to support, your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

A closer look at Ambassador School L.L.C



How well does the school perform overall?

Ambassador School provided an **Acceptable** quality of education for its students.

- The majority of students in grades 3 to 9 attained well on the International Benchmark Tests.
- Attainment and progress were overall good but was weaker in the primary phase where there were the majority of students.
- Learning and teaching were better in the middle and secondary phases where there were fewer students.
- Teaching methods did not always meet the needs of all students, particularly students with special educational needs.
- There was not enough enrichment in the curriculum, and there was a lack of challenge and support for students in lessons to meet their learning needs.
- Not all members of the school governing board were clear about their roles and responsibilities in making sure the school's actions improved student outcomes.



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

- Students with special education needs were identified on entry to the school.
- When enrolling their child at the school, parents were able to refer their child to the Learning Centre for assessment and support.
- Students were well-supported by the activities provided in the Learning Centre.
- Additional resources were provided to support students, and the curriculum was modified in lessons so that student with special educational needs made acceptable progress.
- Not all teachers were skilled or trained to meet the needs of students with special educational needs.

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning Skills?

		KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good ↑	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Good ↑	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	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
	Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
 Mathematics	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
 Science	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good ↑	Good	Good
	Progress	Not Applicable	Good ↑	Good	Good
		KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Learning skills		Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good

↑ Improved from last inspection

↓ Declined from last inspection

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Assessment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

Overall school judgement

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Students' enthusiasm for learning and their strong work ethic.
- Science and Islamic Education in the Primary phase.
- Students' personal and social development.
- Attainment of students in grades 3 to 9 in the external international assessments.
- Outstanding health and safety.

Changes since the last inspection

- Improved attainment and progress in Islamic education and science in the primary phase.
- Appropriate systems for the identification of students with special educational needs had been introduced.

Recommendations

- Raise students' attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language in all phases.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the Primary phase.
- Improve teachers' use of assessment in lessons to ensure activities meet the needs and abilities of all students by providing continuous professional development for teachers based on an accurate analysis of students' performance in relation to their abilities and individual starting points.
- Improve outcomes for students by providing appropriately differentiated activities to meet student's individual needs in lessons so they can make accelerated progress.
- Enrich the curriculum across all the phases so as to provide students with more challenging activities and experiences which reflects their interests.
- Ensure all students with special educational needs are appropriately and effectively supported by teachers in lessons so they make good progress.

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning Skills?

KG		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Mathematics	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Science	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Primary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Good 	Good 
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good 	Good 

- Recitation, understanding and memorisation of the Qur'an were strong for most students in Islamic Education. They demonstrated good knowledge of the key Islamic pillars and practices and an appropriate knowledge of the prophets.
- In Arabic as an additional language, students' showed basic writing skills and an appropriate range of vocabulary. They made steady progress in matching sound to text, and in learning new vocabulary, expressions and phrases. They had not yet developed the ability to construct their own sentences.
- In English, students' skills varied across the grades. Overall, students demonstrated acceptable levels of skills in their listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills were more developed by the time students reached the upper Primary phase. Notably, students' speaking skills were the most developed.
- In mathematics, most students had a secure understanding of number and were aware of the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. The majority could collate information and interpret data. Students demonstrated weaker problem-solving and enquiry skills, and learning lacked challenge. A significant minority of students were not attaining well in relation to international standards in mathematics.
- Students in science made good progress in understanding science vocabulary, particularly through hands-on and practical scientific experiments.

Middle		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good

- In Islamic education, students' recitation and understanding of the Qur'an were in line with expectations. They had a basic level of understanding of Islamic concepts and their links to all aspects of their lives. They made steady progress with their recitation of the Qur'an.
- Most students had an adequate range of vocabulary and recall in Arabic as an additional language. They accurately pronounced and wrote phrases they had learned in class. For the majority of students, extended oral communication was limited. Better progress was made by students in their listening skills, when learning new vocabulary, and in their basic writing skills. Progress in speaking was the weakest and students' progress in reading was limited by a narrow range of textbooks.
- In English, speaking was the strongest skill demonstrated by students. Their writing in their workbooks showed good attainment but progress was impeded by the narrow range of exercises completed. The majority of students made strong gains in their speaking skills in lessons but a minority did not.
- Most students in mathematics had a secure understanding of number, could identify and name shapes, were aware of the sum of angles in a shape, and could label angles correctly. A significant minority were not meeting international assessment benchmark standards.
- In science, students made better progress when presenting their work to their peers in class and when answering questions posed by peers.

Secondary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Good
Science	Good	Good

- Most students in Islamic Education achieved adequate levels in their recitation of the Qur'an and their understanding of key Islamic concepts. Their understanding of Hadeeth was limited. Most did not link Islamic understanding to their lives.
- In Arabic as an additional language, most students recognized and could read, write, and pronounce a range of words, phrases and expressions. Most did not independently use the vocabulary learned in lessons. Reading was limited by the narrow range of texts provided.

- In English, when given opportunities for independent learning, the majority of students attained well. However the most able students were often restricted in their progress by the low expectations of their teachers, and the least able students were often not effectively supported. Textbook reading and writing, together with low level activities in lessons restricted students' progress. The most vocal students in lessons made progress in speaking but a minority did not.
- Students could relate the relevance of mathematics to real life and to other learning such as particular shapes in buildings. They could explain the aesthetic and structural benefits for buildings and most students had a good understanding of algebra.
- In science, students made better progress when they were given time to reflect on their work and given ample opportunity to discuss and explain their learning with each other.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Learning skills	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good

- Students across all phases demonstrated a positive attitude towards learning and worked cooperatively in groups.
- The skills of collaboration and effective sharing of ideas were well developed in the Secondary phase.
- Students in the Middle and Secondary phases were very capable of working independently. However, students in the Primary phase were too often over-directed in their tasks by teachers.
- Students in the Secondary phase were aware of their strengths as learners. They could reflect and talk confidently about their learning. This was less well developed in the Primary phase.
- The development of students' enquiry, reflection and critical thinking skills was an inconsistent feature in lessons across all subjects and phases.

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good

- Students routinely demonstrated responsible attitudes to their learning, and showed good behaviour.
- Relationships between students and staff were respectful and courteous at all times.
- Most students understood the importance of healthy living and made healthy food choices.
- Student attendance and punctuality were good.
- Older students were able to set targets for improving their own work. This needed further development in Primary and Middle phases.

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students demonstrated a good understanding of the heritage of the United Arab Emirates. • They understood key Islamic values and culture as well as their own culture. However, their awareness of other global cultures was less well developed. 				

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Community and environmental responsibility	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across all phases, most students had a good understanding of conservation and environmental sustainability. They showed a strong awareness of their responsibility towards others, their local community and beyond. • They frequently made effective contributions to the life of the school, and they demonstrated a positive work ethic. However, there was too-often an over reliance on teachers to direct them and make decisions for them. 				

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of teachers effectively managed students' behaviour but this was less consistent in the primary. • Most teachers had a good knowledge of their subjects and planned lessons which included clear learning outcomes. However, the objectives and activities in the lesson plan were not always shared with students in the lessons so students were not always clear about what they were learning and why. • The quality of teacher questioning varied across the school. Some teachers effectively used open ended questioning to encourage students to think and reflect. However, other teachers used closed questions which restricted students' deeper thinking and discussion. • A few teachers provided appropriate differentiated activities for students, but the majority simply provided different worksheets which did not meet all students' needs. A few teachers provided students with active and practical learning activities but this was not consistent. • A number of lessons were dominated by teacher talk and did not provide time for students to actively engage in learning and become independent learners. This hindered their progress. 				

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Assessment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A narrow range of assessment techniques was being used across the school. Individual tracking of students' progress was secure and provided teachers' a clear understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses. • The school did not make effective use of analysis of international bench-marking assessments to inform them about students' learning and attainment. • Some heads of departments had used assessment information to identify areas to improve teaching and curriculum to meet students' needs but this was not consistent practice. Although students were being assessed daily, teachers were not always using this formative assessment information to provide learning to reflect the abilities and needs of all students in all lessons. • Teachers provided encouraging written comments on students' work but feedback did not always adequately inform students about how to improve their work nor the next steps they should take in their learning. 				

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a clear rationale for the curriculum, which was the ICSE and this was complemented by a range of internet based tools such as 'Curriculum Trak' for teachers and parents to keep informed about how well children were learning. There was some choice in subjects for students in the Secondary phase. However, the curriculum significant extension beyond the use of textbooks in a number of subjects, particularly in the curriculum for Arabic as an additional language. • Curriculum content had not always been modified to meet the needs of all students, particularly the most able and students with special educational needs. • Effective transition arrangements were in place in the Primary and Middle phases so that students could progress between both stages of their education. • There were some good cross-curricular links in place, but these were not consistent in all grades or in all subjects. 				

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts had been made to design and plan the curriculum to meet the needs of students. There had been modification of curriculum in the Secondary phase of the school which had the fewest number of students. There was limited modification of the curriculum for the range of abilities amongst all groups of students including those with special educational needs. • Teachers had a little understanding of the range of student abilities. • There was participation by some students in inter-school and extra-curricular activities. • There were some extra-curricular activities provided, but few productive links with the local and wider communities. 				

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and safety	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The care and welfare of students was the highest priority for the school. School policies were in place to ensure outstanding standards of health and safety for all students. The school provided high quality arrangements for security, transport, maintenance and record-keeping. The canteen maintained a high standard of cleanliness and served healthy food. Most students made healthy food choices and understood the importance of healthy lifestyle choices. 				

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Quality of support	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships between students and staff were courteous and respectful at all times. There were effective systems in place for monitoring student attendance and punctuality. Students with special educational needs were admitted into the school and had been identified. Appropriate differentiation and modifications in learning and support for all students, and particularly those with special educational needs, was not yet consistent in most lessons. 				

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

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders within the Learning Centre demonstrated their committed and dedication to supporting students with special educational needs. Additional support was provided by suitably experienced and qualified special education teachers, and contributed positively to the overall quality of the provision. Appropriate systems were in place for the identification of students with special educational needs. Students' social and emotional well-being were enhanced by positive student-teacher relationships. A far more skilful modification of the curriculum for students with special educational needs was required to enable them to make better progress in lessons. Effective parent partnerships with the school supported the acceptable progress of students with special educational needs when they attended the Learning Centre. Students were provided acceptable levels of support and advice throughout their learning, to help them to be successful. 	

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to the school and were aware of the need for school improvement. • There were clear roles and responsibilities, and leadership was distributed. There were strong lines of accountability, effective communications, and productive working relationships. • Efforts made by leaders had improved monitoring systems in the school but these had not had an impact on the quality of teaching and improved student outcomes. • Teacher professional development needs were not always accurately identified and appropriate continuous professional development provided to ensure improvements for students in lessons. • Leaders had achieved some success in improving aspects of the work of the school and demonstrated their capacity to further improve the school. 	
	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation was a feature of school development and action plans. • There had been a thorough gathering of internal and external assessment and performance data but this had not lead to a full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Performance management for teachers was in place but not always effective in driving up standards in teaching and learning to enable students to make better than acceptable progress. • School leaders had not accurately measured the areas of development for the school to give clear direction to all stakeholders for school improvement. • There had been partial progress made by leaders in meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection report. 	
	Overall
Parents and the community	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was strong parental involvement in the school, and productive links between home and school to support children in their learning and development. • Communications and reporting were regular and informative. However, progress reports provided little personalised information about each child and did not provide next steps to help students and their parents identify the next steps which should be taken to improve students' learning. • There were some relevant links with the wider community to enhance students' learning. 	

	Overall
Governance	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board of governors routinely sought the views of stakeholders in the school, listened to their opinions and concerns, and responded to their suggestions for improving the school. • The board of governors had not held the school sufficiently accountable for ensuring there were improvements for students. • The board had not ensured the recommendations from the previous inspection report had been addressed and successfully met. They had not done enough to help leaders overcome the challenges faced in the school. 	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day-to-day management of the school was efficient and effective. • Teachers were qualified and deployed well. • The premises, facilities and resources were adequate, but specialist facilities were restricted. • Learning resources were enough to promote better than acceptable learning, particularly in the Primary phase. 	

What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection 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	219	36%
	Last year	207	42%
 Teachers	57		93%
 Students	15		100%

- Of those who responded to the survey, the majority of parents thought the school was well led and were satisfied with their child's progress in key subjects except for Arabic as an additional language.
- Most parents did not know if their child made progress in Islamic Education and if students had gained an understanding of Islamic values in Dubai.
- The majority of parents were satisfied with teaching and learning at the school. However, a significant minority expressed concerns about the quality of teaching and the use of technology as a learning resource.
- More than one quarter of parents were not satisfied with the range of subjects and extra-curricular activities provided to students.
- A significant number of parents were concerned about the high turnover of teachers, particularly when their child's teacher left during the school year.
- Students were satisfied with their education at the school and thought they made good progress in key subjects.
- Teachers were satisfied with education at the school but the majority did not know if students had made progress in key subjects.

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

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This 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 school inspection will report on changes 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