

INSPECTION REPORT

Russian International School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Russian International School

Location	Muhaisnah 4
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dubairuschool.com
Telephone	04-2646160
Address	Muhaisnah 4, Dubai
Principal	Liudmila Kashurnikova
Curriculum	Russian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades	4-17 / Kindergarten - Grade 11
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	455
Largest nationality group of Students	Russian
Number of Emirati students	less than 1%
Date of the inspection	18th to 20th March 2013

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The context of the school

Located in Al Muhaisnah, the Russian International School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Grade 11, aged four to 17 years. The school opened in September 2011. It aims to provide a Russian curriculum taught in Russian language for residents of the UAE.

At the time of the inspection, there were 455 students on the roll, with just over half being Russian nationals. Eighteen different nationalities were represented among the student population, half of whom were new to the school in the current year. The school had identified a few students who had special educational needs.

There were 34 teachers, including the Principal. The majority of teachers were Russian and most had appropriate teaching qualifications. Almost a third of all teachers were new to the school.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Students' good attainment and progress in Russian language and mathematics;
- The positive behaviour of students and their good relationships with teachers;
- Students' pride in celebrating Russian culture, being an active part of the Russian community in Dubai and their preparation for re-integration into the Russian education system where required.

Recommendations

- Ensure compliance with Ministry of Education requirements regarding Islamic Education and Arabic for additional language learners;
- Ensure teaching and learning across the curriculum is of a consistently high quality in order to improve the attainment and progress of all students;
- Improve the use of assessment, including the consideration of alternative forms of assessment, to inform teaching and ensure students know how to improve their learning;
- Identify and support students with special educational needs more effectively;
- Improve the current basic Russian curriculum to ensure students experience sufficient breadth and balance in their learning, choice where relevant and the systematic development of skills;
- Ensure that the governing body provides the school with sufficient staffing, resources and appropriate facilities to improve its work.

Progress since the last inspection

- The school had failed to take the necessary steps to ensure that provision for Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language complied with Ministry of Education requirements;
- Staff training had taken place in order to improve teaching, learning, attainment and progress but much remained to be done in these aspects;
- The use of assessment information to plan more appropriate and challenging learning tasks for all ability levels had not been fully embedded in practice;
- The arrangements for the identification, support and curriculum provision for students with special educational needs had not improved;
- The development of students' skills required further attention;
- The traffic flow problems caused by school buses and parents' cars had been generally overcome, although continued vigilance and sufficient adult supervision was necessary to safeguard students exiting the main school gate.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
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	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Russian				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment was good in all phases in Russian and mathematics, and acceptable in all phases in English and in science. In Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language, attainment was unsatisfactory. Only a minority of students could recite short Surahs of the Qur'an adequately. A majority had limited knowledge of the five pillars of Islam. Understanding of Islamic concepts and knowledge of the Prophet's life and Sunnah were limited across the school. A few students could say short sentences in Arabic. Writing skills were weak. In English, higher attaining students were able to read and analyse text. However, fluency in speaking and extended writing skills were underdeveloped for most throughout the school. Attainment in Russian language was good compared with Russian curriculum expectations. In literature it was well above expectations. In mathematics, attainment in algebra, geometry and analysis was well above international standards. In science, students' knowledge was good but limited practical resources restricted the development of relevant skills and understanding across all phases.

Progress was good across all phases in Russian language and mathematics and acceptable in science and English except in Kindergarten where progress in English was unsatisfactory. Progress was unsatisfactory in all phases in Islamic Education and Arabic. Learning was reduced to performing tedious and unproductive tasks. In English, progress was restricted. In Russian, good progress was made despite an increasing number of non-native speakers entering the school. In mathematics, children in Kindergarten made good progress in numeracy but needed more practical activities to aid understanding. In science, progress in critical thinking skills in all phases was limited.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Almost all students behaved well, even when unsupervised. They got on well with each other and respected their teachers. Almost all had positive attitudes towards learning. Older students readily assisted younger ones and willingly took on responsibilities around the school. In Russian classes, they had responsibilities to check homework and to support each other. Most students had secure knowledge about keeping themselves healthy but required additional physical education and sports to ensure better fitness. Students arrived punctually for classes at the beginning of the day. Attendance was acceptable. Elected Student Council representatives of Grades 8 to 11 took their roles seriously. Most students showed respect for Islamic values and had adequate knowledge of how these influenced life in Dubai. They demonstrated respect for the UAE culture through daily singing of the National Anthem and celebrating the National Day. They had acceptable knowledge of UAE heritage. They could name local dress and types of food. They celebrated major Russian

festivals and showed respect for the cultures and traditions of students from other nationalities. They were knowledgeable about safeguarding the environment and understood the dangers of pollution. Students did not initiate sufficient projects within and outside the school.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable across all phases of the school. Most teachers knew their subjects well; however, not all had a clear understanding of how children learn. The quality of lesson planning was variable. Often planning was for a whole class. More able students were not challenged and there were insufficient materials available at an appropriate level for those who were less able. The needs of second language learners were seldom considered. Most teachers' expectations of all learners were too low. Only a few planned and shared learning outcomes with students, or had a lesson plenary. Excessive teacher talk during lessons restricted opportunities for independent learning. Too few classroom resources, such as information communication technology (ICT) and models, restricted chances to engage, motivate and enhance students' understanding. Almost all teachers enjoyed positive relationships with their students. Most used a range of questions to test recall, but only a few asked challenging questions to probe students' deeper understanding. Teaching in all phases did not promote the development of skills of independence, application and critical thinking.

Learning was acceptable in all phases. Students were generally keen to learn. Almost all listened well and did what was required of them. Only a few had a clear understanding of their learning strengths and areas they needed to improve. There were regular opportunities to share their ideas with their peers but fewer chances to become independent learners or work collaboratively with others. In most lessons, learning was limited to whole class activities. In Kindergarten, this restricted learning opportunities through play and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically. At higher grades, problem-solving tasks rarely required students to persevere or show resilience. In a few lessons, especially in Russian literature, students were able to develop their critical thinking skills, but this was underdeveloped in most other subjects. The lack of availability of technology in most lessons restricted students' ability to find things out for themselves. Students with special educational needs were seldom provided with additional learning support.

The assessment of students' work was acceptable throughout the school. Teachers regularly recorded students' levels of attainment and tracked their progress. The school was yet to employ a data management system to support its collection and analysis of internal test results. As a result, teachers did not challenge or extend students well enough. Nevertheless, teachers had a growing knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. They gave oral feedback but written feedback was variable with few improvement prompts. Students' self- and peer-review had been incorporated into a few subject assessment programmes.

The school had not yet adopted rigorous external benchmarking to measure students' performance against international standards.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable. It delivered a basic level of Russian education but did not comply with the UAE Ministry of Education requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic. In restructuring the timetable, time had been reduced in some subjects, affecting the balance of the curriculum. Students' educational development was hindered. Too often the curriculum relied on text books. It had little enhancement and offered students, particularly at the senior grades, few choices. Opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking were inconsistent features of the planned curriculum. With the exception of Russian language and mathematics, the curriculum did not meet the needs of all groups of students. It provided limited opportunities for the systematic development of skills, cross-curricular links, enrichment, practical work and applications to real life. Although there were occasional projects and themed weeks, the extra-curricular activities were too limited.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were acceptable. Regular medical and dental checks contributed towards students' personal health. The importance of healthy lifestyles was yet to be built more systematically into the curriculum and the day-to-day life of the school. The premises were mostly clean, tidy and well maintained. Although evacuation procedures were practised, more regular safety audits were required. Exit routes required clear labelling and better availability. Older students supported bus supervision but RTA expectations were not met. Safety belts were not regularly used. Child protection measures were in place and staff were well informed about expected procedures.

The quality of support for students was acceptable. Relationships between staff and students were mostly positive and respectful. A minority of staff knew their students well. Consequently, guidance to students about their academic performance and progress was inconsistent. There was no counsellor available to offer personal support, guidance or career advice. The school had recently introduced opportunities for students to visit local universities.

[View judgements](#)

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

The identification of and provision for students with special educational needs were in their early stages and were unsatisfactory overall. No qualified co-ordinator had been employed. Recent training to help teachers identify students with special needs had been provided. A few students who needed support had been identified. Insufficient information and guidance had been provided to teachers. They could not effectively determine students' learning or behavioural requirements or plan effectively to meet their needs.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable overall. The hard-working and committed Principal managed the day-to-day life of the school effectively. She and other senior leaders had a shared vision for the school but strategies and plans designed to improve the school were not achieved. Middle managers' impact on the school was variable. Communication and teamwork required strengthening. Best practice in teaching and learning was not shared. High staff and student turnover and limited resources and facilities restricted improvement opportunities. The school had not improved since the previous inspection. Staff had failed to address almost all of the previous inspection's recommendations. The school's capacity to improve depended upon significant personnel and resource constraints being overcome.

Procedures for self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. Staff had yet to understand fully what self-evaluation involved. Data was not always analysed rigorously to identify trends and issues requiring action. An acceptable improvement plan had been devised but its implementation had been limited and had little impact on what students experienced in classrooms. Performance management procedures included evaluating teaching and learning but the regular changes in staffing and the constant enrolment of new students restricted the effectiveness of provision.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. Parents were positive about the welcoming nature of the school, opportunities to consult with teachers and progress reports received about their children. Home-school student diaries were an effective form of communication. Parents were very supportive of the close ties the school had established with the Russian community in Dubai. Recent links established with the local Islamic Council were also seen as a positive step. Senior students had few opportunities to be involved with the immediate community around the school.

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي

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The quality of governance was unsatisfactory. The Governing Board had a broad representation of stakeholders who were keen to support the work of the school. It was successful in raising the public profile of the school but not in improving provision for students in a number of key aspects. It did not hold the school to account. It had failed to ensure that the last inspection's recommendations for improvement were appropriately addressed. It failed to provide adequate resources to enable necessary improvements to be made.

Staffing, facilities and resources were unsatisfactory. Whilst most teachers were suitably qualified, an additional teacher of Islamic Education was required. The school lacked teaching assistants in the Kindergarten and the early grades, a student counsellor and a suitably qualified special educational needs co-ordinator. Specialist facilities were restricted or lacking for physical education, outdoor sports, art, music and science. The small swimming pool was not operational. Access for those with additional needs was limited. ICT facilities within classrooms remained poor and restricted the use of ICT as an integral part of the learning process. Overall, resources to support independent learning as well as teaching remained limited.

[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	84	22%
	Last year	45	13%
Teachers	22		65%
Students	53		95%

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

About a fifth of the parents, a majority of teachers and almost all of the students responded to the survey. Of these, most parents, the majority of students and almost all teachers said they were satisfied with the quality of education offered by the school. Almost all parents and all teachers felt that students were well looked after and safe in school but a fifth of students disagreed. Almost a third of parents and students felt students were not sufficiently involved in community projects in Dubai. Most parents and students thought students made good progress in English as an additional language, Russian, mathematics and science but not in Arabic as an additional language. Half of students and teachers felt that students did not make good use of ICT to support learning. Over a third of teachers felt that students had a poor range of extra-curricular clubs. Most parents and almost all teachers felt the school was well led. Many parents and students wanted more regular physical education and sports.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

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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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