

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai British School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai British School

Location	Springs 3, Emirates Hills, Dubai
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dubaibritishschool.ae
Telephone	04-3609294
Address	PO Box 37828
Principal	Mark Ford
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 13
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,054
Number of Emirati students	2 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	Sunday 27th to Wednesday 30th November 2011

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2011-2012	3
How has the school progressed since the last inspection?.....	3
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	5
How good is the students' personal and social development?	6
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?	9
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	10
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	11
What happens next?.....	12
How to contact us	12
Our work with schools.....	13

The context of the school

Situated in Emirates Hills, Dubai British School opened in 2005. At the time of the inspection, there was a total enrolment of 1,054 students, aged three to 18 years. Students were grouped into 43 classes, eight at Foundation Stage, 18 at the primary phase and 17 at the secondary phase. Fifty five different nationalities were represented amongst the student population.

The school followed the English National Curriculum. Students were entered for IGCSE at the end of the secondary phase and GCE Advanced level examinations at the end of the post-16 phase. At the time of the inspection, there were 84 teachers, including the Principal, a senior leadership team and three part-time teachers. Almost all teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. They were supported by 20 teaching assistants. At the time of the inspection, the Principal was in his first year in post and eleven teachers were recently appointed to the school.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Dubai British School provided a good quality of education, with some significant strengths. These included outstanding attainment and progress at Foundation Stage and good or better attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science in the other phases. There were outstanding teaching, learning and assessment at Foundation Stage and broadly good practice in other phases and an outstanding curriculum in all phases. The quality of support for students with special educational needs was outstanding. Attainment and progress in Islamic Education and areas of Arabic required improvement. The school had a particular focus on developing successful learners. Although this was showing clear results in certain areas, the quality of teaching and learning remained inconsistent. Building on the good self-evaluation and improvement planning, senior leaders showed the capacity to improve the school.

The school had made acceptable progress towards addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. It had raised attainment in Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics at post-16; but attainment in Arabic as a first language remained a concern. The school had made progress in encouraging independence and creative thinking in learners. Middle managers were developing effective leadership skills in managing their areas of responsibility.

Key strengths

- The outstanding attainment and progress of children in Foundation Stage in English, mathematics and science;
- The attitudes and behaviour of students and the quality of their personal and social development;
- The enrichment of the curriculum and the quality of its continual review;
- The outstanding support for students with special educational needs and English as an additional language;
- The effective development of students' skills as successful learners.

Recommendations

- Raise students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Improve the consistency of quality of teaching and learning across the school;
- Comply with statutory requirements regarding Arabic as a first language and review timetabling arrangements for Arabic and Islamic Education;
- Involve all staff members more systematically in self-evaluation and improvement planning.

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

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

Attainment at Foundation Stage in English, mathematics and science was outstanding. In the primary years, it was good in all core subjects, except Arabic, where it was acceptable. At the secondary and post-16 phases, attainment was good or outstanding in English, mathematics and science; acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language and unsatisfactory in Arabic as a first language. At the

Foundation Stage, children had well-developed skills in reading comprehension in English and in understanding number and calculation. They were developing a strong sense of enquiry in science. In Islamic Education, recitation skills were under-developed. In Arabic across all phases, both as a first and as an additional language, students' extended writing required further development. In post-16 English, the majority of students achieved well above international expectations. In mathematics, problem-solving skills were under-developed, as was students' ability to apply abstract concepts to the real world. Students' understanding of the scientific method was a strong feature throughout the school.

Progress at Foundation Stage was outstanding in English, mathematics and science. In Islamic Education, it was good in the primary years and acceptable in the senior years. Students made good progress in applying Islamic values to their lives. Progress at post-16 in Arabic as a first language was unsatisfactory. However, students were making good progress in primary and secondary in Arabic as a second language. Progress in developing their writing skills remained weak. In English, mathematics and science, students at all phases were making good or better progress. Most students identified as having special educational needs and students with English as an additional language were making broadly good progress across the curriculum.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Students' behaviour was outstanding in all phases of the school. They were courteous, welcoming and enjoyed the company of friends from other cultures. They respected their teachers and were enthusiastic

about learning. Attendance over the last full term was good. As they moved through the school, students became increasingly confident and independent. The majority chose healthy lifestyles. Most students had good understanding of Islam and its influence upon Dubai. They knew about traditional clothes, local foods and sports such as falconry, and could identify Dubai's famous buildings. Older students could discuss the positive and negative aspects of Dubai's multi-cultural society and they clearly valued diversity. Students made a significant contribution to school life and took seriously their responsibilities for the community. The school had provided healthy meal options at the request of the Students' Council. Students knew how Dubai had developed in recent years, and older students knew about Dubai's economic success and the effects of the world recession. They had an excellent understanding of environmental issues, such as pollution, and had been instrumental in establishing recycling in school.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

Teaching was good across the school and outstanding in the Foundation Stage, where teachers' expectations were consistently high. Overall, the close and respectful relations between teachers and students ensured a positive learning environment in classrooms. Teachers skillfully used their subject knowledge and a variety of resources to reinforce new learning. Effective questioning skills engaged most students well, promoted their thinking skills and helped teachers to assess their understanding. In the best lessons, teachers allowed for students' different learning styles. Teachers generally had good expectations of students, including those with special educational needs. However, not all lessons held sufficient challenge for all students. Some over-direction by teachers did not allow students to make their own choices and work in their own ways and at their own levels. The teaching of Islamic Education in the secondary phase and of Arabic throughout the school was acceptable. Teaching of other subjects was good, particularly in information and communications technology (ICT) lessons, drama, music and psychology.

Learning was also good across the school and outstanding in the Foundation Stage. Students had mature and positive attitudes to learning. They sustained concentration very well and showed self-confidence in lessons. They collaborated well, for example, when carrying out science experiments. Students, especially the oldest, were responsible for their own learning, could explain what they had learned and knew how to improve. Many were good at thinking critically and creatively, but teachers did not consistently develop these skills. Students often related their learning to real life, but did not routinely have opportunities to do so. Children in the Foundation Stage were inquisitive and enthusiastic learners at all times.

Similarly, the assessment of learning was good across the school and outstanding in the Foundation Stage. Excellent systems for recording and tracking students' progress enabled teachers to be fully aware of their strengths and emerging needs. The careful analysis of assessment data supplied vital information for curriculum planning and teaching. However, there was little effective assessment information available in the Arabic and Islamic Education departments. Most, but not all, teachers made good use of assessment data to influence their planning and to meet the needs of all students. Students assessed their own learning and that of others. Older students were well-involved in setting their own targets for learning. The constant, detailed assessment in the Foundation Stage charted children's progress very well. There was some outstanding marking of workbooks, but such practice was not consistent.

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

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

The curriculum was of outstanding quality. Leaders regularly reviewed its provision and had put in place wide-ranging changes in all phases of the school. It had increased lesson times to one hour to accommodate the requirements of the International Primary Curriculum and the introduction of personal learning targets. The school arranged a modified timetable for students who needed extra literacy support, so that in a small group, intensive teaching could take place. There was very good provision of extra-curricular activities. Very good programmes were in place to support transition between phases, but there was cases of weaker arrangements at the end of the primary phase which affected progression to Year 7. The curriculum was enriched by outstanding community links, including, for example, the involvement of a Dubai engineering company to help students build a racing car.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

The school had excellent procedures to assure the health, safety and support of students. Two full-time nurses and regular visits by a medical doctor provided medical expertise. Staff members successfully encouraged students to be vigilant about their own safety. The school environment was in good condition, very well-maintained, clean and secure. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle had a high profile and the canteen supplied wholesome and nutritious food. There were good sports activities in which a significant number of students participated. Staff members were sensitive to the personal needs of all students. There was good monitoring of child protection, although most staff members had not had recent training.

Staff-student relations were caring and respectful. The Extended Learning Department provided a very high quality of support to students with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those identified as being gifted and requiring additional challenge. Individual learning plans were agreed upon with parents for these students. These plans contained very appropriate learning targets. Good steps were taken to monitor students' attendance and punctuality. A counsellor provided students, teachers and families with very good advice and helped ensure students' well-being. The school's careers guidance counsellor provided students with good advice regarding future education options and careers.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

The leadership of the school was outstanding. Leaders at all levels had the clear capacity to make effective contributions to the school's improvement. The Principal and senior leadership team demonstrated high levels of skill and had a positive, purposeful relationship with teachers, students, and their parents. Leaders were achieving the school's vision of ensuring that students realised their academic potential, became successful learners and developed as well-rounded individuals. Leaders and heads of subjects demonstrated high levels of commitment and good focus in their areas of responsibility.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were of good quality. The school's leaders had developed a range of ways of monitoring and evaluating their work; senior leaders had carried out a very thorough whole school self-evaluation. It effectively analysed a range of examination data. Ongoing evaluations of classroom practice by managers and very effective performance management improved individual teachers' performance. Students' views were sought through 'student voice' events. The school reviewed its improvement plan and priorities regularly. Leaders had made significant progress in addressing the last inspection report's recommendations.

Partnerships with parents and the community were outstanding. There were well-developed two-way communication channels between the school and parents. Parents felt very well-informed about programmes of work and their children's progress, with a focus on students' achievement and target-setting. The parents' advisory board effectively represented parents' concerns. However, there was scope for the school to offer parents more information about its plans for improvement. Purposeful links with the community were in place.

Governance of the school was good. The governing board supported the school very well in a range of ways. There were regular opportunities for the school to review its action plans with the board and for the board to act as a critical friend. The school was clearly held accountable at these meetings. The school's

advisory board offered representatives of the parent body the opportunity to be better involved in decision-making processes.

The overall management of staffing, facilities and resources was good. Key personnel ensured that the school was efficiently managed. Almost all teachers were well-qualified, and the school maintained a focus on performance management and professional development. The resources for learning were of acceptable quality. Despite some limitations, the facility provided an attractive learning environment which was clean, bright and well-maintained. The number of science laboratories limited the development of active science learning skills. The timetabling of Arabic and Islamic Education lessons for certain students required improvement.

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	287	45%
	Last year	294	47%
Teachers	66		76%
Students	127		100%

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

A significant minority of parents responded to the survey, about the same as last year. Most teachers and all Year 12 and 13 senior students responded to their surveys. Most parents and students were satisfied with the overall quality of education available at the school. Most parents believed that their children's progress was good in English, mathematics and science; but in Islamic Education and Arabic, only a minority thought progress was good. Parents held broadly positive views about the different aspects of provision by the school and indicated that they were involved in improving it. Most teachers believed that inspection had led to improvements at the school. Teachers and students also held broadly positive views of the school, but a few of each group thought that the resources available for learning were less than good.

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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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