

Our Own Indian School Inspection Report

Pre-Primary to Secondary

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.

Our Own Indian 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 Qouz, Our Own Indian School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from pre-primary to secondary, aged three to 17 years. The school follows a CBSE curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 3589 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education offered. Almost all said that their children made good progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. They were pleased with the quality of teaching. Almost all felt their children enjoyed lessons and were enthusiastic about learning and behaved well. Most said that the school offered a good range of extra-curricular activities and almost all said that equipment and resources were good. Almost all believed that the school treated children fairly, provided good support for children with special educational needs and kept children safe. Most thought that there were good links between the school and parents. Almost all parents reported that their children were well cared for and that the school kept the children healthy and safe. Most parents felt that they were involved in the work of the school. They said the school was good at consulting them, that they received good information about progress and that they felt comfortable about approaching the school if they had a complaint. Parents were very satisfied with the way in which the Principal resolved any issues raised. Almost all felt that the school was well led, but over two fifths did not know how the school

had responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection. There was a large number of individual comments which centred on the unsettling nature of the turnover of teachers in the school and the unsatisfactory opportunities for games and PE.

How well does the school perform overall?

Our Own Indian School provided a good quality of education. It had responded well to the recommendations from the last inspection report. Islamic Education was much improved, teaching, learning, assessment and the tracking of students were good. The school's self-evaluation and improvement planning were good and clearly focused on raising standards.

Attainment and progress were good in Islamic Education, English, mathematics and science across all phases of the school. Attainment in Arabic was acceptable throughout the school but progress was unsatisfactory in the primary phase, in spite of the fact that the school had initiated numerous strategies to improve the situation. Students demonstrated good attitudes and behaviour and understanding of economic and environmental issues in Dubai. Additionally, Islamic, cultural and civic understanding was also good. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good in Islamic Education, English, mathematics and science in all phases but it was unsatisfactory in Arabic. The curriculum was good and had been enriched by the introduction of the International CBSE. Students were supported by well developed systems to ensure safety and care. The Principal and his senior team managed the school effectively and demonstrated a commitment to ongoing improvement.

Key features of the school

- Good progress made by the school since the last inspection;
- Good leadership and management of the Principal and the senior team and the strong leadership of the school council;
- Good attainment and progress in Islamic Education, English, mathematics and science;
- Unsatisfactory progress in Arabic in the primary phase;
- Good teaching, learning, assessment and tracking of students' progress;
- A good curriculum which had been enriched by the introduction of the International CBSE syllabus.
- Good attitudes and behaviour of almost all students;
- The high number of students of all ages who achieve excellence in a range of extra-curricular activities;
- Good professional development opportunities for teachers.

Recommendations

- Improve the governance of the school by creating an advisory body to ensure wider representation of stakeholders;
- Improve the teaching and learning of Arabic, especially for boys;
- Provide additional support for students with special educational needs;
- Provide additional support for teachers in Kindergarten;
- Improve the facilities for PE and sport.

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

Overall, attainment and progress in Islamic Education in both primary and secondary school were good. Generally, the recitation of The Holy Qur'an was good and students had good knowledge of the basic principles and the pillars of Islam. Most primary students were able to explain and demonstrate how ablution and daily prayers were performed. They had good knowledge of the benefits of prayer. In higher grades, most students could identify the main events in Islamic history. Students of secondary grades were able to use their higher order thinking skills to infer from the events and could describe the contribution of key figures of Islamic history and Fiqh such as Iman Ahmed Bin Hanbal. Overall, development of students' conceptual and logical understanding and their refinement of recitation skill of the Qur'anic verses over time was good across all sections of the school.

Overall, attainment in Arabic as an additional language was acceptable though, in general, girls' attainment was higher than that of the boys. Progress was unsatisfactory in primary and acceptable in secondary and girls made better progress than boys. In Grade 1 the majority of students could match the names of objects and pictures. In Grade 5 students could identify names of animals and speak in simple sentences. In Grade 8 students could talk about the importance of exchanging gifts with friends and members of the family. In the secondary school, students could read short dialogues about familiar topics. Overall, however, students at all levels were not able to speak freely about familiar topics and could not consolidate their learning in writing according to international standards.

Attainment and progress throughout the school were good in English. By the end of kindergarten most students could follow instructions, pronounce words phonetically, match words with pictures and write neatly using the appropriate formation of letters. In the primary phase, most students spoke in complete sentences, used the dictionary accurately and framed sentences with new vocabulary. By Grade 8, most students listened attentively and read confidently with understanding. They summarised texts, drew comparisons between poets including, for example, Wordsworth and Robert Frost and confidently discussed mood, theme and style. They developed strong skills in creative writing. Most senior students expressed complex ideas with age-appropriate vocabulary, analysed texts and wrote competently on

subjects ranging from the narrative to the reflective. In Grades 10 and 12 students were performing above international expectations and above CBSE standards.

Attainment and progress across all stages, in mathematics, were good. In pre-primary, children could write and compare equivalent and non-equivalent sets by matching. In Grade 1 all students could recognise and describe the position of objects in ordinal form. An understanding of fractions was well developed and, by Grade 5, students could recognise equivalent fractions and reduce them to their lowest term. The concepts of perimeter and areas were developed through the school; students in Grade 6 found the perimeter of regular shapes. In Grade 12, students understood conditional probability, independent events and were able to define the multiplication theorem on probability. Mathematical projects and competitions further developed students' interest in mathematics.

Attainment and progress in science were good across all phases of the school. Students used their senses to test simple scientific ideas in Kindergarten classes. In primary grades students showed good understanding of scientific facts and were able to draw conclusions from enquiry based learning. In the secondary school, most of the students developed their critical thinking and reasoning skills. They were able to verify hypotheses through practical work in science laboratories and most of them were able to discuss their findings. The examination results corroborated lesson observations in the Kindergarten, primary and secondary sections where students demonstrated levels of knowledge skills and understanding in accordance with CBSE curriculum and international standards.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of the students were good throughout the school. Most students were well-mannered, courteous and showed respect towards their teachers, staff in general and to their fellow students. Many gave willingly of their time to assist teachers and other students with their work. Almost all students could engage in discussions confidently and with relevant points. They were well behaved in the classrooms and shared positive relationships with the teachers. Their sense of belonging and security was evident in their commitment to work and school activities. Their attendance in school was good, as was their arrival to school.

Students' civic responsibility, understanding of Islam and appreciation of local culture was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the primary and secondary grades. Students took proactive roles in school and outside activities which promote citizenship. They understood the basics of the Islamic faith, local culture and traditions and actively participated in local and international celebrations.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was good in all three phases. Students understood the effects of recession on the economy of Dubai. Senior students expressed their desire to embark on careers in relation to global and local needs. Their participation in activities such as, recycling waste on the school campus, and fund raising events for the Haiti earthquake victims, showed contribution and sensitive awareness towards the general environmental and human causes.

How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching was good throughout the school. Almost all teachers had very good subject knowledge and they used this to enhance learning opportunities. Almost all teachers provided child-centred education for their students. However, teachers of Arabic, had only a limited understanding of how students learn an additional language. Teachers made good use of the resources available and all successfully used information and communications technology (ICT) during their lessons. Questions and tasks were well matched to the differing needs of the students. Almost all teachers gave students positive feedback, encouragement and praise for correct and good attempts. Almost all lessons carried an element of paired work and group work, although not all students actively engaged in this type of work.

The quality of learning was good throughout the school. Students had very positive attitudes towards learning. Students respected their teachers and co-operated well with them. Students made connections between new and prior learning in class. They produced quality work in their journals and engaged in enquiry and research. Greater emphasis was needed to further develop these skills. Students showed considerable respect for the talents of their fellow students and assisted each other through a buddy system. Most students recognised the areas in which they must make improvements and they understood what they should do to improve. In most lessons students were able to display elements of higher order thinking and critical thinking.

The quality of assessment was good throughout the school. There was an agreed code of assessment which has resulted in very good tracking of students' progress. On-going assessment was an integral part of all lessons and the results of these assessments were carefully noted. In almost all classes assessment was continuous, consistent and relevant to the work in progress and teachers regularly provided oral and written feedback to all students. However, in Arabic, errors were common and widespread in the students' notebooks and even in examination papers. These were not corrected and guidance was not given when it was required. Overall, effective practices were in place by the class teachers at pre-primary and primary level and by the teachers and subject co-coordinators at secondary level to monitor the progress of all students. Diagnostic tests were carried out at the start of the school year from Grade 3 upwards and the results of all tests were available to inform teachers, students and parents. Summative tests were carried out at the end of each period and some good instances of peer assessment were noted during lesson observations.

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

The quality of the curriculum was good and students were benefiting from the measures taken by the school to address previous shortcomings. The curriculum built in the school's vision and values aligned with the appropriate attainment targets. The recently launched, learner-friendly CBSE-*i* curriculum, for Grades 1 and 9, enhanced the students' academic interests and developed their personal and social skills. With the exception of Arabic, the range of languages and subjects gave varied learning experiences, meeting the needs and career aspirations of the students. Appropriate time allocation for all subjects, apart from PE, ensured balance across all elements. The annual review of the curriculum identified the requirements for books and resources for learning; the level of challenge was being reviewed on an on-going basis. This, however, was less effective in planning additional programmes for students who were falling behind academically. Clear progression was evident from one phase to another. Cross-curricular links were established and ICT was integrated into the subjects and used by students for developing research skills. The curriculum incorporated a wide variety of co-curricular and cross-curricular programmes through school assemblies, activities and well-designed displays. The school provided a platform for students to go beyond the textbooks through inter-school competitions and events, such as United Nations simulation events, science exhibitions and Mathematics Olympiad. The variety of well-planned extra-curricular activities was a positive feature. Strong links with the local community enabled students to undertake educational field trips. The school had links with businesses and universities which enhanced learning. In addition, there were extensive programmes that promoted care and concern for the environment.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and support arrangements for students were good across the three phases. The school was clean and well maintained. Classrooms and play areas were safe, corridors and staircases were spacious allowing free movement. Students were supervised throughout the day including the break. The canteen was clean and hygienic, and offered a variety of healthy options. The school carried out fire drills three times in the year. Fire extinguishers were seen on every floor, and evacuation plans were displayed and assembly points demarcated. The school bus system was efficient. Students' attendance was monitored closely. Arrival and dispersal were orderly and efficient. The child protection policy and the procedure had been shared with teachers. Staff-student relationships throughout the school were based on mutual trust and respect. Students felt free to approach teachers for academic help and for guidance in other areas. Teachers took responsibility for students' emotional and academic growth.

Student progress in almost all subjects was tracked closely through primary and secondary schools. Records were maintained and additional academic support was provided. In Arabic, however, tracking of listening, speaking, reading and writing was not sufficiently rigorous. A behaviour-modification plan had been developed to deal with incidents of unsatisfactory

behaviour. Senior students received adequate information and guidance to make career choices. However, students with special educational needs required further support in school to overcome their learning difficulties.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership by the senior leadership team was good throughout the school, and had had a direct impact on raising standards. Leadership by middle managers was acceptable. The Principal and his team had identified a clear vision for the school, which was shared with students, staff and parents. The senior leadership team worked effectively together and had made good progress in fulfilling the recommendations of last year's inspection. Particular features of the good leadership were the empowerment of the school council and the good systems of communication with staff and parents.

Systems for self-evaluation and school improvement were good. The school's action plan was comprehensive and had successfully identified key priority areas for development. Good systems and structures were in place to monitor and evaluate the work of teachers, and students' learning and progress. Effective procedures for appraising staff through lesson observations were well established and carried out meticulously.

The school had formed a good and close partnership with its parents, who expressed a high level of satisfaction with the work of the school. Parents felt that they received good feedback about their children's progress through the helpful regular reports, and parents had easy access to staff. The school had promoted good links with the local and wider community in a variety of environmental, cultural and charitable enterprises.

The governance of the school was acceptable. The school's governing body represented the school's owners and provided valuable advice on financial and educational matters. They held the management of the school to account through regular meetings and a rigorous annual appraisal of the principal. However, the governing body did not fully represent other stakeholders, including parents.

The school had an adequate number of teachers, but one fifth did not have a teaching qualification. The school had largely overcome this problem by providing outstanding staff development. Progress in the learning in Arabic, however, was adversely affected by the lack of specialised teachers. Spaces in the school were well-utilised especially the computer laboratories and the library. However, students in the primary section were cramped in small classrooms that made group work difficult. Sports facilities were inadequate and there were no teaching assistants available in Kindergarten.

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	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good

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	Secondary
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.

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