

INSPECTION REPORT

Islamic School for Education and Training

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Islamic School for Education and Training

Location	Al Muhaisnah
Type of school	Private
Website	www.sslootah.com
Telephone	04-2646001
Address	PO Box 19964, Dubai
Principal	Faddah Said Ahmed Nasser Lootah
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / Kindergarten to Grade 10
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	938
Largest nationality group of Students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	434 (46%)
Date of the inspection	19th to 22nd November 2012

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The context of the school

The Islamic School of Education and Training is located in the Al Muhaisnah area of Dubai. The school provides education for boys and girls aged three to 17 years, from Kindergarten to Grade 10. The student roll was 938, of which Emiratis were the largest nationality group. There was a total of 31 nationalities represented at the school. Classes in the Kindergarten were mixed gender. Boys and girls were in separate classes from Grade 1 upwards.

The school followed the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum with some enhanced features. There were additional Qur'an recitation lessons from Kindergarten onwards, and vocational subjects were offered to students from Grade 5. Students took the relevant curriculum examinations and these were supplemented by internal assessments. The school included a residential component that housed orphans from outside the UAE, and offered vocational skills courses for older boys and girls.

Fifty-three students, or approximately six per cent, were listed by the school as having some form of special educational need. A minority of these students received learning support in withdrawal sessions.

There were 50 full-time teachers, including the senior leadership team, and six teaching assistants in the Kindergarten. The teachers in the school had a range of appropriate academic and teaching qualifications. Approximately 15 per cent of the teachers had been newly appointed during 2012.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The good or outstanding attainment and progress in Islamic Education across the school;
- The good or outstanding attainment and progress in Arabic in Cycles 2 and 3;
- The students' good attitudes and behaviour;
- The quality of relationships between all students and staff;
- The good partnerships with parents and community.

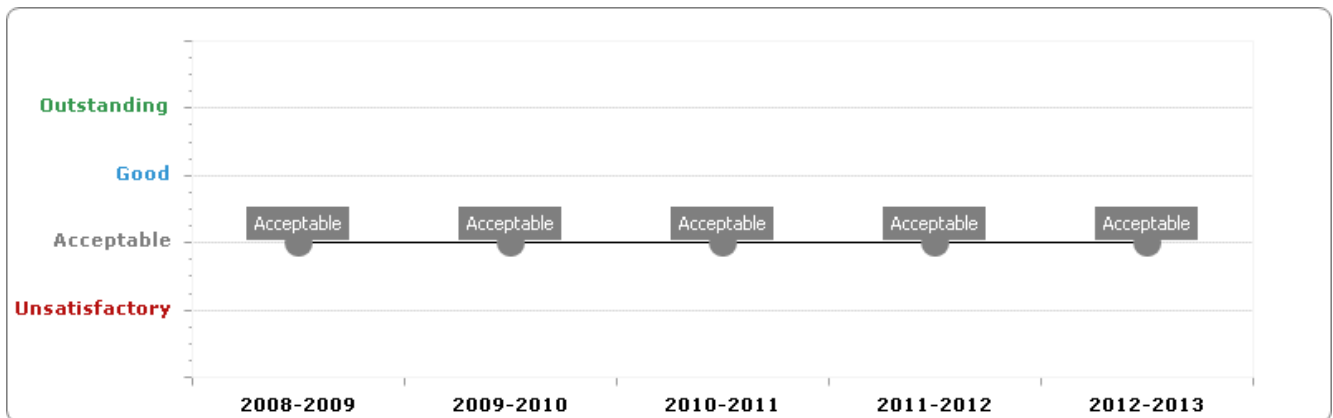
Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress so that they are more consistent across all the key subjects;
- Further develop the use of assessment data to inform lesson planning, teaching and modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of all students;
- Develop students' enquiry skills and their independence in learning, across the curriculum;
- Improve the systems for identifying and supporting students with special educational needs;
- Further develop the monitoring of classroom practice to link it more closely to the quality of students' learning, and to inform ongoing staff professional development.

Progress since the last inspection

- Attainment and progress in Cycle 2 English had improved;
- The quality of teaching and learning had risen in the Kindergarten to acceptable, and to good in Cycles 2 and 3;
- Leaders had raised their level of commitment to the self-evaluation and improvement planning process, and to professional development.

Trend of overall performance



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

	Kindergarten	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good	Outstanding
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Outstanding	Not Applicable
Progress	Acceptable	Good	Outstanding	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Kindergarten	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Kindergarten	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Kindergarten	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Kindergarten	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

The majority of students' attainment was acceptable, but it was appreciably better in Arabic and Islamic Education. Students' memorisation of the Qur'an and use of recitation rules were good; students applied Islamic concepts and principles to real life. In Arabic as a first language, a majority of students' speaking, reading and writing skills in Cycles 1 to 3 were above curriculum expectations. Their grammar skills were well developed in all cycles. In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students in Cycles 2 and 3 had language skills above age-related expectations. In English, a significant minority of students could confidently use everyday English in role-play scenarios. In mathematics, most students had an age-appropriate knowledge of the subject but they did not always apply their knowledge adeptly. In science, students were able to relate topics such as healthy eating and habits to real-life examples. Practical skills were at an early stage although students increasingly had opportunities to do small practical activities both in the laboratory and in classrooms.

All students made good or better progress developing their understanding of Islamic concepts and the Hadeeth as well as their Qur'an recitation skills. In Arabic lessons, students studying Arabic as a first or as an additional language were gaining good language skills, especially listening, speaking and reading. The progress of most students' reading skills in English was limited because there were too few opportunities to read widely. In mathematics, students developed good calculation skills over time and became more confident in solving problems. In Cycles 2 and 3, students made good progress in terms of the scientific knowledge gained and their application of this knowledge. They were developing the relevant skills for carrying out their own investigations. Most students made at least acceptable progress from their starting points, taking into account their levels of ability.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Students' memorisation of the Qur'an and use of recitation rules were good, and they knew, understood and could explain some Fiqh law and Seerah of the Prophet. In Arabic as a first language, students' speaking, reading and writing skills were above curriculum expectations for the majority of students in Cycles 1 to 3. In English, students had improved their attainment in both Kindergarten and Cycle 2 as a result of greater challenge being provided for students; this included higher expectations for more independent learning.

In mathematics, Kindergarten children had an acceptable understanding of the properties of basic shapes and of the language of measure. Students in Cycles 1 to 3 attained acceptable standards in their numerical skills. They generally calculated accurately and used formulae and strategies confidently. Science attainment was acceptable throughout the school and students were able to relate topics such as healthy eating and habits to real-life examples.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Across the school, students' attitudes were consistently good. In all areas, students showed high levels of consideration for each other and for their school. They had positive attitudes to adults. They behaved well when moving about the school. They had a good understanding of the importance of healthy living. Attendance was high. However, a few of the younger students arrived late. Students had a good understanding of Islam and valued the ways in which it shaped their daily lives. By the end of Cycle 3, students had an accurate understanding of how Dubai had developed and the challenges it faced. While most students appreciated different ways of life within the Muslim world, they had little understanding of other cultures in the modern world. Throughout the school, students were increasingly aware of the need to protect the environment. They were regularly involved in local conservation projects, tree planting and saving energy initiatives. They were actively engaged in recycling a wide range of materials in imaginative ways and in re-selling them profitably.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable in Kindergarten and Cycle 1. It was good in Cycles 2 and 3. Teachers had good subject knowledge and their understanding of how Kindergarten children learn has developed since the last inspection. Kindergarten teaching now involved more opportunities for active learning. Overall, lesson planning did not detail activities to support students with special educational needs or to extend the more able students. Teachers were aware of students who had arrived at the school with limited Arabic language skills and did their best to support them in lessons. Most teachers made learning objectives clear at the start of lessons, but these were often little more than headings from the textbook. Teachers used questions well to check understanding but did not make enough written demands of students. Data projectors were used to enhance learning in most classrooms. Teaching in other subjects including information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and the vocational programme was acceptable.

Learning was acceptable in Kindergarten and Cycle 1. It was good in Cycles 2 and 3. Students were co-operative learners and the majority took responsibility for learning. They made connections with real life, particularly in science and in some English lessons. Learning was inconsistent across subjects because students wrote little in subjects other than English. Students had good theoretical knowledge but they did not automatically apply this to problem solving or higher order thinking. Students' independent enquiry skills, the use of ICT and research were less developed well throughout the school.

Assessment was acceptable. The school had developed a range of assessments including the use of diagnostic tests at the start of the year to identify each student's skills. Consequently, most teachers had good knowledge of individual students' strengths and weaknesses in their classes. Teachers then drew up plans to help individuals improve but the expected interventions to support or extend students in lessons were not evident. Systems to track students' performance had been implemented but the quality and accuracy of the data were not secure at this stage. The school had not yet fully analysed the data to identify differences between the performances of boys and girls and use the resulting information to influence curriculum review and teaching.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable in most phases but good in Cycle 3. The development of the Kindergarten curriculum had created a more balanced and child-centred approach to learning. This was further enhanced by the introduction of extra English classes in the Kindergarten. Professional development training for teachers on enquiry-based learning had made a positive impact on science lessons. The range of vocational subjects provided from Grades 5 to 10, in addition to the standard Ministry of Education curriculum, produced a distinctive breadth and balance to the curriculum. Apart from in Cycle 3, where students were being prepared more systematically for the world of work, there was little choice for students. The school had begun to review the curriculum annually supported by the diagnostic testing of students. However, this review did not consistently influence teaching in lessons. A wide range of workshop courses for students in Grades 5 to 10 held in the adjacent technical training centre were of particular value for Grade 10 boys, preparing them for entry into the workplace. The use of the female sports club located on site twice a week for swimming, fitness training and gymnastics classes for the girl students, enriched physical education options.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school's arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of all students were acceptable. Well-organised arrangements were in place to ensure that all areas of the school were secure. School transport arrangements and procedures were well supervised. The school was clean and the premises were secure. The medical team kept detailed records on the medical needs of all students and ensured that students receive appropriate care. The canteen was regularly monitored although the systems for promoting students' awareness of healthy lifestyles and eating habits were not sufficiently rigorous. The school organised regular fire drills for all phases of the school. Staff were aware of reporting requirements for keeping students safe.

The quality of support for students was acceptable. There were good staff and student relationships throughout the school. New students, including Kindergarten children, were well supported in settling into school routines, and older students received helpful guidance on the next stage of education. Students were well supported by the social worker who maintained positive links with parents to ensure continuity of care from home to school. Any behaviour concerns were quickly resolved with parents. The promotion of attendance and punctuality was acceptable.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students with special educational needs receive some additional support although the systems for identifying their specific needs and supporting them effectively within the classroom were weak. Identification of special educational needs was at the early stages of development and focused on general statements rather than specific personalised special education needs categories in accordance with KHDA guidelines. For example, the school categorised students learning English as an additional language as having special educational needs. Progress of students with special educational needs was hampered by the lack of resources. In classes, strategies were not sufficiently modified to support the students' needs.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The school leaders had a strong, shared vision for the school. Improvements to training had improved the capacity of the senior leadership team, other leaders and teachers and helped them to become more effective in their roles. Good communication, along with positive and supportive relationships, enabled leaders to develop the school cohesively and effectively. Students were given responsibilities, including leading assemblies and looking after younger students.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Self-evaluation processes had been introduced and supported improvement planning, and the school had sought external professional support in their efforts to further improve standards. The school was not yet rigorous enough in evaluating the progress of improvement plans. However, the plans were beginning to have a positive impact on students' outcomes, for example in raising standards in English in Cycle 2 and improving the quality of teaching and learning in the Kindergarten and Cycles 2 and 3. There had been acceptable progress in addressing the recommendations of the last inspection report.

The partnership with parents and the community was good. The 'open door' policy and the encouragement by the staff to engage with parents through regular meetings were strengths of the school. Parents valued the information provided to them on their children's progress, and generally had a sense of involvement in the school's development processes, for example, through questionnaires. There were good arrangements for communication between home and school. The Mothers' Council provided ongoing feedback to the school Principal, governors and administrative staff regarding parents' and students' concerns.

Governance was acceptable. Members of the governing body saw their function as that of critical friend and were developing their role of holding the school to account. The governors' involvement in the self-evaluation process and improvement planning was increasing, and they were focusing on specific issues, for example further enhancements to the curriculum and improving professional development opportunities. School leaders kept the Board informed of developments. There were effective communication links between the governors, parents and staff.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. Adequate numbers of experienced and qualified teachers were deployed appropriately. The school ran smoothly, and the timetabling and administration generally ensured good use of the facilities available on the extended site. There were sufficient computer laboratory facilities, library, science laboratory, fitness facilities, canteens and recreation areas. Overall, the school premises and facilities provided a clean, well-maintained and safe environment for learning and

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teaching. The school also benefited from access to nearby higher education facilities, including a media centre and workshops. The quality and quantity of learning resources within the classrooms were varied, but in general supported the learning needs of most students.

[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	150	5%
	Last year	253	32%
Teachers	30		60%
Students	9		32%

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

Almost all parents and most students agreed there was good progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first and additional language. Most students agreed that they enjoyed school and thought that behaviour was good. All teachers and parents agreed that Muslim students had a good understanding of Islamic values. Most parents were satisfied with the consultation between themselves and the school regarding their children's progress. In the comments received, a few parents expressed concerns about the limited range of extra-curricular activities. Almost all parents and students agreed that teaching and learning were good at the school. Almost all parents, students and teachers believed that students were well looked after and safe at the school and on school buses, and that they were respected, valued and treated fairly. Most parents and teachers were satisfied that the school was well led and that the inspection process had led to improvements, with the last report accurately reflecting the school. A majority of parents agreed that they were involved in decision-making at the school.

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

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