

# Regent International School Inspection Report

Foundation Stage to Secondary

Report published May 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.

Regent International School was inspected in March 2011 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 The Greens, Emirates Hills, Regent International School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to Secondary, aged three to 16 years. The school follows a UK curriculum. At the time of the inspection there were 871 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

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 provided by the school. However, a minority had concerns about the progress made by their children in Arabic as a first language. The majority of parents of children learning Arabic as a second language thought progress was at least satisfactory. Most parents thought their children's progress was good or better in English and a majority thought their children's progress was good or better in mathematics and science. Most thought the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory, with almost three quarters stating it was good. Almost all respondents were satisfied with their children's behaviour and their enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning. A minority of parents thought communication between school and parents was not effective and that the school did not respond appropriately to parental concerns. A similar proportion expressed the view that school reports were not informative. However, most thought parent-teacher meetings were helpful and were held regularly. A minority of parents did not know whether or not the school was well led, but most parents who had expressed a view were confident in the leadership of the school.

## How well does the school perform overall?

The overall performance of the school was good. The school was making rapid improvements and had already raised attainment in almost all key subjects within the current academic year. The school had made good progress in addressing almost all the recommendations from the previous report. The capacity to make further improvements was good.

Attainment and progress were good in English and mathematics in all phases of the school. Attainment was acceptable in Islamic Education and progress was good. In Arabic, both attainment and progress was acceptable. Attainment and progress were good in science in the Foundation Stage and primary phase and in the secondary phase it was acceptable. Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding throughout the school. Students had supportive and positive relationships with each other and the mutual respect between students and teachers was strong. Teaching for effective learning, the quality of students' learning and assessment were good in all phases of the school. Teachers used a good range of strategies with flexible groupings which promoted independent learning and collaboration. Health and safety arrangements were good throughout the school. Staff were quick to respond when potential hazards were brought to their attention, but the lack of co-operation from a minority of parents who parked their cars near the school without sufficient care continued to cause problems. The quality of support provided was outstanding. Individual students' academic progress was effectively tracked so that the school and parents could work together to address any concerns and provide appropriate guidance and support. The quality of leadership was good. The new senior leadership team had made an immediate and positive impact and standards were improving quickly. Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good, but formal documentation needed refinement. The school had good self-awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. The partnerships with parents and the local community were good. This was a strong feature of the school with a very active parents' association that made a major contribution to school improvement. A minority of parents had concerns about communication and the format of school reports. Governance was acceptable. The response to recommendations in the previous report to extend the representation of parents and teachers was cautious. Staffing, facilities and resources were good. The school was benefiting from a hard working dedicated staff and, despite the previously high turnover of teachers, good standards of teaching were being achieved.

## Key features of the school

- A high proportion of students with English as an additional language (EAL) and almost three quarters of the students were in the Foundation Stage and Primary Years 1 to 3;
- An improving school with a good capacity to make further progress;
- Improvements in attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Outstanding attitudes and behaviour, with positive relationships founded on respect and tolerance;
- Good teaching, learning and assessment in the majority of lessons across the school;

- High standards of health and safety, outstanding support and highly effective monitoring of progress and well being;
- A committed staff, led by a dynamic senior leadership team that was rapidly raising standards and expectations.

## Recommendations

- Continue to raise standards of attainment in Islamic Education, Arabic and science;
- Further improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning across the school so that the needs of all students, particularly the more able, are met;
- Improve subject leadership in key subjects;
- Further extend stakeholder representation on the Governors' Advisory Group so that parents and teachers can play a more active part in ensuring accountability and reflecting the views of the school community.

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

Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable and progress was good across the school. In the primary stage, the majority of students could memorise short chapters of The Holy Qur'an with few errors. Most students knew the five pillars of Islam. The majority of students knew and applied the conditions of prayer and most understood the ethics of Friday prayer. They were able to distinguish between Zakat and charity in Islam. In the secondary stage, the majority of students could distinguish between duty and voluntary fasting. Most students were able to perform congregational prayers correctly. However, students' skills in reciting The Holy Qur'an were underdeveloped.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language were acceptable across the school. The majority of students in the primary stage could listen and speak sentences and a few common phrases correctly. They were able to read sentences and short paragraphs with few errors. After practice, the majority of students knew types of notation in Arabic. Writing skills were less well developed. In the secondary stage the majority of students took part in discussions on a range of topics and were able to read accurately and write short paragraphs. Most students used simple, correct grammar when they formed sentences. A minority of secondary students were able to write extended passages.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were acceptable across the school. In the primary stage the majority of students listened well and they were able to communicate with simple phrases and with few errors. They matched Arabic words and pictures accurately. The majority of students were able to name and order the days of the week. They could differentiate between masculine and feminine words in grammar. In the secondary stage the majority of students could speak about their countries and locations. The

majority could read and write simple sentences, but only a minority were able to read and write paragraphs.

Attainment and progress in English across the school were good, despite a large proportion of students with English as an additional language. Their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills were above expectations for their age. Children in the Foundation Stage made very good progress in listening and speaking. Most children formed letters correctly when beginning to write and could write their names correctly. The majority of older children could write simple sentences independently, using appropriate punctuation. When reading, they decoded, used context clues and read with expression. Throughout the primary phase, writing skills developed well. With support, most at the early stages could write their own stories. Secondary students listened well and spoke confidently, with good intonation and pronunciation. They wrote in paragraphs about stereotypical characters, made inferences and could explain imagery.

Students' attainment and progress in mathematics were good across the school. Children entered Foundation Stage 1 with low levels of mathematical understanding, but quickly made good progress in all aspects of number. By Foundation Stage 2, children counted in 2's, 5's and 10's, sorted basic shapes according to their properties and understood addition and subtraction. In the primary phase, students used mathematical vocabulary well to explain their strategies and recorded in a range of ways. Year 6 students solved multi-step word problems accurately and provided suggestions for creating formulae related to angle calculations within shapes. Year 10 students knew the Pythagoras Theorem and applied this to complex problems. Year 11 students reached high levels of mathematical understanding and attained well above international expectations in mock examinations.

Attainment and progress in science were good in Foundation and primary stages and acceptable in the secondary phase. Students in Foundation Stage enjoyed a good range of practical activities and experiences which improved their understanding of the world around them. They could talk about the textures of materials and explain that the earth moved round the sun. Younger primary students were able to carry out tests to find out if materials were waterproof and by Year 5 they could design a fair test on rates of evaporation. Year 9 students could explain the concept of terminal velocity and by Year 11 they had a good knowledge of the formulae for forces. Overall, students' knowledge and understanding were stronger than their investigative skills, but these were improving.

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding throughout the school. Students behaved very well in lessons and engaged positively with their learning. Around the school, students demonstrated positive attitudes and high levels of self-control and the student council was active in making suggestions for improvement. Healthy living was embedded in the curriculum and students made healthy food choices and were enthusiastic in their approach to a balanced physical education programme. Whilst attendance overall was acceptable, punctuality was good and arrival to lessons was timely.



Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good throughout the school. Students took responsibility and enjoyed helping in class and around the school. The prefects, led by the head boy and girl, exercised leadership roles within the school and added to the feeling of calm and purpose. Students initiated ideas for community and charitable projects and took pride in helping others. The students embraced the multi-cultural nature of their school and Dubai. They enjoyed finding things out about each others' cultures, as well as valuing and celebrating UAE culture and heritage. All students sang the UAE national anthem enthusiastically and respectfully and were very knowledgeable about local customs and traditions.

Economic and environmental understanding was good throughout the school. Students were aware of how Dubai had developed to modern times. They were aware of the impact of this on specific groups of people living in Dubai. Their awareness of local and global environmental issues, such as water and energy conservation and pollution, was good and they cared for the environment by recycling and conserving energy at school. Students of all ages gave good ideas of how Dubai might further reduce its consumption of energy and water and address pollution.

## How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching across the school was good. Most teachers showed good subject knowledge and understood how students learn. There were high levels of engagement between students and teachers. Lesson planning was effective, with good timing and pace. Questioning was used well to establish prior knowledge and encourage thinking, reflection and problem-solving. Teaching provided opportunities for active learning. Most teachers used information and communications technology (ICT) effectively. All teachers knew their students well and almost all personalised their teaching and used practical activities, linked to real world experiences. However, there was also variability in the quality of teaching across the school. In a minority of lessons across all key subjects, there was insufficient challenge for the most able students. In a few lessons, objectives were not always shared effectively to enable them to understand the purpose of the lesson. Not all lessons included plenaries. There were limited opportunities for students to use ICT in lessons to support their learning. Higher order and critical thinking needed further development.

The quality of students' learning in all phases was good. Students frequently took responsibility for their own learning. Almost all were attentive, well-motivated and worked independently. In most lessons, students worked well in pairs and groups, discussing and questioning each other. The majority challenged each other and were confident to ask questions to clarify and draw conclusions. They responded well to questions and could communicate what they had learned. Students were active learners who enjoyed learning by doing. Enquiry, higher order and critical thinking were a developing feature of students' learning, but were not routinely part of lessons. There were too few opportunities to learn

through investigation, research, discovery, and enquiry. Students were more passive when lesson challenges were low.

Assessment throughout the school was good. Effective evaluation of attainment and recording of students' progress informed teaching. Teachers used a range of assessment strategies, such as questioning at the start of lessons, to evaluate prior learning. Most used targeted questioning during the lesson to evaluate and help individual students and to make adjustments to lessons. Teachers circulated in class to check progress and provided individual feedback on students' ideas. Peer and self-assessment was a feature of more successful lessons. In a few classes, there was good use of plenaries to review learning. Work was regularly marked, but comments did not always give meaningful guidance on how to improve. Most students could state their targets, but could not always explain how these applied to their work in all subjects.

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

The quality of the curriculum was good across the school. It had a clear rationale and had been reviewed for continuity and progression. As a result, the Early Years Foundation Stage planning had been fully implemented, with an emphasis on learning through play in classrooms and outdoor areas. The review had also led to the development of cross-curricular themes, especially in the Foundation Stage and primary school. New initiatives, such as the use of 'reading baskets' in the primary school, had raised the profile of reading and led to improvements in word recognition skills. However, there were limited opportunities in the Foundation Stage for independent creative activities and no age-appropriate resources for ICT including, for example, programmable toys. The majority of students had reading targets and were aware of them. There was a 'literary challenge' initiative in the secondary school and all students had library sessions. Reading for enjoyment was encouraged. Citizenship studies, environmental concerns and 'values' education had been introduced and time was allocated in assemblies to reflect on these issues. Throughout the primary and secondary phases, students followed the English National Curriculum leading to IGCSE. The curriculum was broad and balanced with an appropriate amount of time given to the key subjects and a range of other subjects including humanities, music, P.E, French, Spanish, ICT and art. There was a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including additional English and Arabic, sport, dance, ballet and golf. Visits and visitors, for example a dentist, enriched the curriculum. There were increasing opportunities for students to compete against other schools in sport events.

## How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for health, safety and security were good. The school site was adequately secured and the premises provided a clean, attractive and well-maintained learning environment. School bus transport was well supervised in the limited space available, although a small amount of inconsiderate parking of private cars caused some inconvenience. Good attention was paid to promoting healthy eating and exercise, using strategies such as the daily



'shake up' on students' arrival. Supervision of students was highly effective both in corridors and play areas. Regular fire drills and checks of safety equipment were carried out and a full range of risk assessments was in place. Medical records were comprehensive and staff were aware of the effective procedures for child protection.

The quality of support for students was outstanding. Relationships between staff and students were strong and teachers knew their classes well and were aware of students' individual needs. The school's management of behaviour was highly effective and students felt safe in school, with access to trusted members of staff for guidance or advice. The school maintained a good record of students' attendance and punctuality and any concerns were promptly followed up. Similarly, students' academic progress was very closely tracked and well-targeted support was provided where necessary, both for students for whom English was an additional language and for those who experienced difficulties with their work. A recent development was the provision of good quality support and advice to older students on career paths and future education possibilities.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good. The three Principals had only been in post since the beginning of the academic year but had worked very well as a team and had provided a clear and positive direction. Middle leaders were focused on improving teaching and learning, but there was a lack of clear subject leadership in mathematics, science and English. The teaching staff were very committed and had responded well to the guidance provided by senior leaders and this had helped to improve student achievement across the school. Effective performance management systems were in place and teachers' development needs were addressed by appropriate professional training activities.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Senior leaders knew their school well despite being in post for a relatively short period of time. Areas for improvement had been quickly identified and actions swiftly taken, which had brought about rapid improvement in attainment and progress in almost all parts of the school. Formal written self-evaluation needed refinement so that there was more emphasis on deficiencies and actions needed to address them. Judgements about aspects of school performance required a better match with self-review benchmarks. Significant progress had been made in almost all of the recommendations in the previous inspection report.

The quality of partnerships with parents and the community was good. The parents' association had embraced the welcoming stance of the new leadership group and made a significant contribution to their children's learning and the work of the school. All classes in the school had a parent representative and support was provided in many ways, such as listening to children read and assisting with making the attractive displays in rooms and corridors which made the school such a stimulating learning environment. A minority of parents thought communication between school and parents was not effective and had difficulty accessing the

virtual learning environment. The school's role in the local and wider community was growing, with some useful links with local businesses.

Governance was acceptable. There were recommendations for improvement in the last report and some progress had been made. However, there was still a need to broaden stakeholder representation on the Governor's Advisory Body even further so that parents and staff could play a more active part in ensuring accountability and reflect the views of the school community.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. There were appropriately qualified teachers, with a few specialist staff and a balance of expertise. Facilities were good, such as those for sport. Resources for classes and the extra-curricular programme were mostly good. There was a lack of adequate classroom-based ICT and resources in a few non-key subjects and in the Foundation Stage. There were limited reading materials in Foundation Stage and lower primary and additional library resources were needed to support the development of research skills.

## 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:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
4% Students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.			
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

**How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?**

Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good

**How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?**

Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good

**How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?**

Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Good	Acceptable

**How good is the students' personal and social development?**

Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good

**How good are teaching and learning?**

Age group:	Foundation Stage	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:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

**How well does the school protect and support students?**

Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

**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	Good

**How well does the school perform overall?**

Good
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## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae).

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae).

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