

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai Carmel School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai Carmel School

Location	Al Nahda
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dubaicarmelschool.com
Telephone	04-2675424
Address	Al Nahda PO Box 89212, Dubai
Principal	Alia Abu Yahya
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / Kindergarten to Grade 11
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	803
Largest nationality group of Students	Arab
Number of Emirati students	180 (22%)
Date of the inspection	7th to 9th January 2013

Contents

The context of the school	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013	4
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
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?	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	8
How well does the school provide for Emirati students?.....	9
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	12
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	15
What happens next?	16
How to contact us	16

The context of the school

Dubai Carmel School is a private school for boys and girls aged three to 17 years, from Kindergarten to Grade 11. The school is located in Al Nahda. At the time of the inspection there were 803 students on the roll. There were 180 Emirati students representing more than 22 per cent of the total cohort. There were six separate classes offered for students with special educational needs.

The school provided a UK curriculum. Students studied for the IGCSE in Grade 11. The school curriculum was structured around textbooks. The school was organised into three phases and, for the purposes of this report, these were Foundation Stage, primary (Grades 1 to 5) and secondary (Grades 6 to 11).

There were seventy-five teachers employed in the school. A minority of teachers were new during this academic year. One key subject had 25 per cent new teachers. Most teachers had a university degree but only a few had a teaching qualification. There were 15 special needs teachers and 26 teaching assistants employed by the school.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Good attainment and progress of students in the primary phase in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language;
- Good attitudes and behaviour of students across the school;
- Outstanding understanding of Islamic values in Kindergarten;
- Good health and safety provision throughout the school.

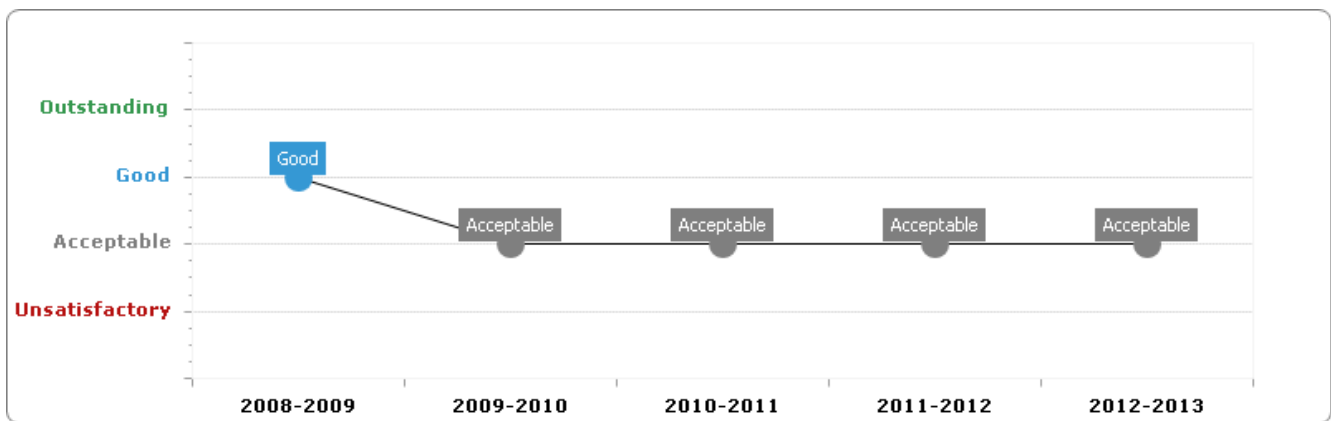
Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment and progress in all key subjects;
- Enable maximum learning in lessons and provide more challenge and more active, independent learning for students;
- Improve assessment procedures by ensuring that:
 - there is formative assessment in class and it is used to inform teaching and learning,
 - there is monitoring and tracking of student progress by teachers,
 - time is given in lessons for student self-assessment.
- Provide a personalised curriculum for students in the special classes which meets their individual needs with individual learning plans that include student's start points, their targets for learning and an accurate record of their progress;
- Offer up-to-date professional development of teachers that helps to improve classroom teaching;
- Ensure that improvement plans are more systematic and focused on key priorities with effective strategies.

Progress since the last inspection

- Improved attitudes and behaviour of boys in the secondary phase.
- Increased monitoring of teaching through lesson observations by school leaders.

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	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?

Attainment was broadly acceptable across the school, with some strengths in Islamic Education and Arabic at the primary stages. In Islamic Education, most students demonstrated appropriate understanding of the key principles of Islamic faith and worship; however, relating them to daily life was limited. Memorisation skills were stronger in the primary phase. Listening and reading skills were good in Arabic as a first language in the primary. There was less accomplishment in the secondary with little extension of conversation and writing. Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was weak with students' writing in primary often limited to copying; in secondary it was limited to single words and simple sentences. In English students demonstrated weak skills in reading. In mathematics, younger students had a sound grasp of number and awareness of geometrical shapes; older students were confident in algebra and data presentation. Science attainment was mostly restricted by a focus on the acquisition of key facts.

Across most subjects and phases, progress was acceptable. Progress in Islamic Education was better in primary than in secondary because teachers used a broader range of teaching strategies. It was hindered in secondary because tasks were not well matched to students' learning needs. The majority of students in Arabic as a first language made good progress in primary. A lack of differentiated tasks slowed progress in secondary. In Arabic as an additional language, progress was restricted due to the fact that the curriculum was narrow and limited to the textbook. Progress in English was hampered by a lack of opportunities to write at length and to edit work. In mathematics, there was little challenge especially for the most able. Students made better progress in science where tasks were differentiated and challenging. Progress in other subjects was acceptable. Progress for students with special educational needs was acceptable but was held back by a lack of a personalised programme of learning for each student.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students made up about 22 per cent of the school population. Approximately half were represented in special needs classes. Overall, attainment and progress were in line with expectations. However, there was better attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language in the primary phase. Girls generally made better progress than boys. Relationships with teachers were positive. Students worked collaboratively in class when opportunities arose. Attendance and punctuality were good, as were attitudes and behaviour in class and outside lessons. Emirati students showed pride in their school and supported its values. They were involved in local community work initiated by the school. Preparation for tertiary studies was acceptable. Emirati parents supported the school's values and rules and

had an understanding of the importance of education for their children. There was Emirati representation on the governing body.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Attitudes and behaviour were good throughout the school. Students' behaviour was respectful and relationships between students and teachers were positive. A few boys in the secondary phase were not always well behaved. Student responsibility was encouraged through participation in school activities such as the school council. Students had an increasing awareness of a healthy lifestyle such as wise food choices. There was increasing participation in sporting activities. Attendance was good as based on the rates provided by the school about the last academic session. However, during the inspection attendance was acceptable. Students were usually punctual to lessons. Children in the Kindergarten demonstrated excellent understanding of Islamic values and recognized the diversity amongst themselves. Most students demonstrated tolerance and respect. Students could explain the influence of Islam on life in Dubai. They appreciated local traditions and the heritage of the UAE. Almost all students described their own cultures proudly. However, their awareness of cultures from around the world was limited. Students volunteered for activities which contributed to school life. 'Eco-monitors' ensured conservation of water and electricity. Older students understood their role as good citizens and were involved in community activities such as the local Clean-Up campaign. They understood the importance of environmental sustainability and could provide thoughtful responses to issues such as air quality in the UAE.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching throughout the school was acceptable. There were examples of good teaching but also of unsatisfactory teaching. Most teachers had good subject knowledge but not a sufficient understanding of how children learn, especially young children. Across all phases most teachers focused on content in lessons rather than the most effective strategies to support learning. Teaching was often lecture style, with teachers talking at length. This gave far less time for student talk. Consequently, students were often passive learners with too few opportunities to actively participate or develop independence. The pace of lessons varied. In good lessons there was challenge and effective questioning but these were not evident in the majority of lessons. Tasks were not consistently well matched to the different learning needs of students. Consequently, learners made less progress than could be expected. The development of enquiry and critical thinking skills was not often a feature of lessons.

The quality of student learning was acceptable overall with a few lessons providing examples of good learning. Students had positive attitudes and were keen to be engaged in lessons. They readily answered questions and collaborated productively when given the opportunity. However, when teaching over-directed learners, students frequently lost interest and lacked motivation. Students were often passive rather than active in their learning and independent learning was not well developed. When given the opportunity students made links to prior learning and to the real world. In good lessons they also demonstrated a capacity for enquiry and critical thinking. When working collaboratively they communicated confidently and could apply knowledge to wider learning contexts.

Assessment was acceptable in all phases. A data management system collated internal test results. However, these results were not used effectively as part of the measurement of student progress to improve learning in classes. Assessment information was not used to inform teaching strategies and suit the needs of all learners. Teachers had a general understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of students. However, there was little use of ongoing assessment to measure student progress throughout the lesson and by the end of the lesson. There were too few opportunities for students to share their understanding. The marking of written work was regular but did not provide students with an understanding of their progress or next steps in learning. The school had not adopted rigorous external benchmarking to measure student performance against international standards.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable across all phases. It had appropriate breadth and balance in most areas but few choices for students at the senior secondary level. The curriculum generally met the needs of students but had weaknesses for specific groups of learners in lessons. The acquisition of additional resources had provided more continuity and progression within a few subjects. Transition from phase to phase ensured that students were usually prepared for the next stages of their education. The annual review of the curriculum had led to broadening a few learning experiences such as the resource centre in the Kindergarten and the use of new information and communications technology hardware in all the phases. The curriculum included a few enrichment activities to enhance students' personal as well as academic development such as public speaking, project links between subjects and a robotics course in science. In Kindergarten, cross-curricular links were developed through a thematic approach. However, there were insufficient opportunities for independent learning, research and promotion of critical thinking in curriculum provision. After-school activities provided enrichment but too few choices.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The arrangements for ensuring health and safety were good. The school provided a safe and orderly environment for students. Security personnel were vigilant in safeguarding the premises. The arrivals and departures of students were well-supervised, including the buses. Fire safety drills and the maintenance of equipment were carried out regularly. The buildings were clean, hygienic and well-maintained. Medical arrangements were effective. Healthy living was given a high priority, including opportunities for sporting activities and the availability of healthy food in the canteen. Although the child protection policy was in place, recently appointed teachers had not been trained in this policy and procedures.

The quality of support for children in the Kindergarten was good and acceptable in the primary and secondary. Students with significant educational needs were welcomed into the school. Staff members showed a strong knowledge and interest in students and managed their behaviour supportively. In the secondary phase, the school provided adequate advice and guidance on subject options and career guidance. Useful links had been maintained with students who had moved on to higher education. The quality of care in the special classes included provision for these students to take part in all aspects of school life. Records on student attendance were thorough.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school was not always effective in meeting the needs of all students with special learning requirements. The curriculum was not adequately adapted to individual students' needs. Tasks and activities did not focus enough on practical and meaningful learning. Teaching strategies too often focused on memorisation and rote learning rather than the development of understanding. Specialist teachers of different subjects did not provide necessary continuity in learning and support. Teaching assistants were not skilled enough to support student learning. Individual learning plans did not provide targets with measurable outcomes and success indicators. Academic support was not adequate for all learners.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was acceptable. There was a shared vision amongst the leaders for the development of the school. Inclusive education was a strong part of this vision. There was distribution of responsibilities and clear roles within the leadership team. All members of the leadership team were well-intentioned.

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However, priorities and appropriate strategies for improvement were not fully in place. Leaders did not measure school improvement with tangible improvements for students and did not measure students' attainment levels against international benchmarks. They demonstrated some capacity for further improvement but needed support to do this.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Parents, teachers and students were regularly surveyed. The school conducted annual self-reviews. Improvement plans were positive but did not have measurable outcomes for learners. School leaders did not have a clear grasp of how to make essential improvements in key aspects of the school. Agreed strategies to improve assessment practices in classrooms, provide more effective teaching and learning, and improve attainment and progress for students were not clear to all school leaders. There had been minimal response to the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents felt welcomed by the school and reported that their opinions were sought and valued by the school. Communication was effective and productive. Written reports on students were regular and kept parents informed about the attainment and progress of their children. However, a few parents expressed concern about the levels of attainment and progress of children in a few key subjects. A significant minority of parents were concerned that they were not more fully involved in decision-making of the school. There were productive links with a few other schools and with the local community.

Governance was acceptable. The board of governors had a broad range of representation, including members of the business community, parents and teachers. About half of the board members had experience in education other than board membership. The board met regularly and was informed of key issues in the school; minutes were kept of their meetings. They had responded to the school's need for more resources and improvements to classrooms and corridors. However, the board had not held the school accountable for improvements such as the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The school's daily operations were effectively managed. The school had provided a few tablet computers in each phase of the school. Projectors were installed in a number of classrooms. However there were too few resources such as information and communications technology, library resources, and non-textbook resources in key subjects. Staffing levels were appropriate and most teachers held university degrees, however few had a teaching qualification.

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Teachers responsible for students with special educational needs lacked sufficient training. Teaching assistants in classrooms provided care and support for students but did not provide consistently effective learning support.

[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	71	14%
	Last year	138	29%
Teachers	58		56%
Students	27		45%

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

A minority of parents completed the on-line survey. Most stated that their children were making good progress in Islamic Education, Arabic as a first language, English, mathematics and science. A significant number felt that their children's progress in Arabic as an additional language was slower. A few parents were concerned about overall progress of their children. Most parents felt that the school was well led but expressed their lack of involvement in decision-making. Students and parents wanted the school to offer a wider range of extra-curricular activities. Only about half of the students were satisfied with technology provision. A little over half of parents were satisfied with how incidents of bullying were handled by the school. The majority of teachers who completed the survey were pleased with the work of the school and commented positively regarding the behaviour of students and the school's care of their children.

What happens next?

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

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

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

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:

inspection@khda.gov.ae

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