

INSPECTION REPORT

JSS International School

Report published in February 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT JSS International School

Location	Al Barsha
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jssisdubai.com
Telephone	04-3256886
Address	Po No 37232,Al Barsha South, Dubai
Principal	Mr.James Richard
Curriculum	Indian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-16 / KG 1- Grade 11
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1579
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	30 th September to 3 rd October

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The context of the school

The JSS International School is a private school located in Al Barsha. The school opened in March 2009. Since then it had continued to grow. It provided co-education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Grade 11, aged four to 16 years. At the time of the inspection there were 1579 students on roll.

The school followed an Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) curriculum. The number of teaching staff had increased in the last year to 107 teachers across all phases. Sixty four support staff assisted teaching. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. Students were grouped into kindergarten, primary, middle and secondary stages. Grade 11 secondary class had been introduced at the start of this academic year. About three-quarters of the student population was in the Kindergarten and the primary stage. Almost all students were Indian nationals and a small number came from 10 other nationalities. There were no Emirati students on roll.

The Principal had been in post for one year. There had been a continued increase in the school roll since the last inspection with 472 students enrolled in the current session. Of these students, 273 started in the Kindergarten. Twelve new teachers had been recruited during the year.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- The good quality of provision in the Kindergarten which encouraged students to be actively involved in meaningful learning through play and investigation;
- Students' very high quality of personal and social responsibility, especially their attitudes and behaviour towards learning;
- The good quality of the protection and care for all students in ensuring their health and safety;
- The good leadership of the senior management team in driving forward improvements.

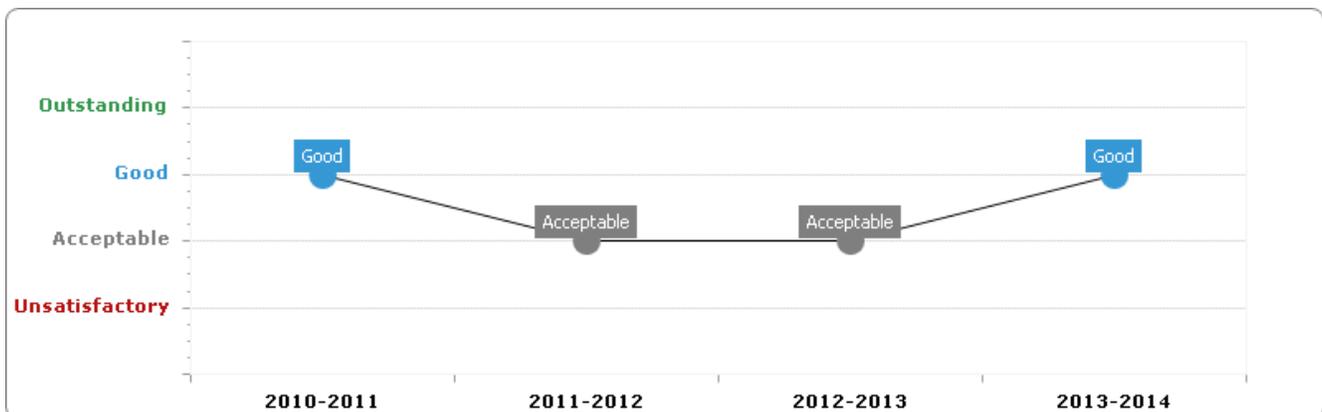
Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language and develop it as part of mainstream learning;
- Improve the quality of learning in Primary to ensure consistency of attainment and progress across all subjects, in line with the rest of the school;
- Improve the support for students with specific educational needs by ensuring their class activities help them fulfil their assessed next steps in learning;
- Develop and extend curriculum opportunities to support and challenge the abilities and interests of all students, including the more able.

Progress since the last inspection

- New teachers and heads of Arabic had been appointed and there was now a stronger focus given to teaching the language. However, this implementation has not yet resulted in improvements in students' attainment and progress;
- Teachers had improved their planning and assessment. They ensured that consideration was given to students' prior learning when they planned lessons and involved students more in planning and evaluating their own learning;
- Progress in the Kindergarten had improved since the last inspection. Teachers had implemented a curriculum and methods of teaching which allowed students to enjoy their learning through purposeful play-based and activities. These new approaches had increased the children's confidence and were helping them develop as independent learners;
- Resources for ICT had improved with the introduction of additional computers and workstations. Tablet computers were also available in classes to improve students' access to this technology in their learning. Interactive whiteboards were in use throughout the school by staff and students to enhance lessons;
- Self-evaluation processes had improved. Staff, parents and students were more involved. School and web-based systems allowed feedback to be gathered and were used by senior management to make improvements.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Quality of students' learning skills	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

Students' attainment in Kindergarten was good across all key subjects. Across the school most students had secure knowledge of Islam's etiquettes and values. Most students in primary had acceptable listening and speaking skills in Arabic but speaking and reading skills were not well developed in Middle and Secondary. Writing skills in Arabic were limited across the school and were restricted to copying from textbooks with little understanding. In English throughout the school, students listened well and talked with confidence. They had a good grasp of grammar in the middle part of school. At the secondary stage, they were skilled in debate and produced writing of a high standard. In mathematics, students had a good understanding of concepts in Kindergarten but acceptable in primary. Problem solving was a strong feature across all phases. In science, kindergarten children demonstrated good skills of enquiry and, in lower primary grades, students understood the basic characteristics of different materials. Middle school students observed and recorded accurately. Secondary students explained their findings accurately using scientific language.

In Islamic Education, most students in the primary and middle stages made good progress and developed their understanding of Islamic practice such as prayers and how to perform them with reverence. In Secondary, most students made acceptable progress in understanding how and when Zakat should be applied. Most students in Primary were developing their listening and speaking skills in Arabic adequately. The majority of students in Middle and Secondary made too little progress in speaking, reading and writing. Whilst overall progress in English was good at all stages there was variation within the primary classes where students in Grades 1 and 2 did not sufficiently build upon the good progress started in the Kindergarten. Progress in mathematics was good in all phases with students making most rapid progress in Grade 5. Progress in science in Kindergarten and Primary had improved and was in line with the other stages. Students were beginning to show more effective application of their learning in scientific contexts.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Across the school, attitudes to learning were positive. Students were diligent and demonstrated an enthusiasm for learning. In Kindergarten, students enjoyed opportunities to make choices and be active and independent learners. In the primary phase, students' responsibility and engagement in their learning were inconsistent across the grades. They were more passive and had greater reliance on teacher direction. Students learning Arabic required prompting to participate fully in lessons. Across phases, most students were capable of independent research and were enthusiastic when teachers provided open-

ended and challenging tasks. Almost all students cooperated and collaborated well, sharing experiences with each other. Increasingly, they made links across their subject learning and in real life contexts.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal responsibility across all phases of the school was outstanding. Most students displayed exceptionally good attitudes to learning and school life. Behaviour, in class and around school when there was no direct teacher supervision, was commendable. Relationships between staff and students, and students and their peers were very positive. Nearly all students were polite and courteous. In Kindergarten, children showed great self-discipline when engaged in shared learning activities outside their classes, under the supervision of teaching assistants. The school canteen served a wide range of nutritious food and healthy eating was promoted across the school. Students were very well cared for by clinic staff. Attendance and punctuality were both outstanding. Students across the school demonstrated high respect for and appreciation of Islam's values, particularly reaching out to those in need. Older students collected donations to buy gifts for the poor families on the occasions of Eid. Most students had a rich knowledge of the UAE's history. They could give accurate descriptions of life styles in the past. Students across the school had well developed understanding and knowledge of their culture. Their awareness of other cultures was less well developed their sense of responsibility for community and environmental issues was good in all phases except in secondary where they were outstanding.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Both teaching and assessment were good across the stages except in primary where they were acceptable. Almost all teachers had good subject knowledge and planned lessons to motivate students. Lesson objectives were displayed and explained to ensure that students were clear about what was expected of them. In the Kindergarten, children had opportunities to make decisions and develop independence of thought and action. With some guidance, children managed their time well. Across stages, relationships were good: student and teacher interactions were key to meeting lesson objectives. However, there were instances when objectives lacked clear focus or were too broad to be achieved. In most lessons, teachers provided a variety of activities that served to engage and meet the needs of most groups of students. In Arabic in the middle school, planned activities left a significant minority of students disengaged. Whilst planning for differentiation was evident across the school, this was not always

implemented effectively in lessons. There had been significant improvements in the quality of teaching but there was inconsistency, particularly in the primary phase where over-direction affected learning.

Assessment systems were in place that provided a considerable amount of information on student performance. Entry testing provided information that helped staff to address some students' needs. Pre- and post-topic tests helped coordinators to modify the curriculum to support students' learning. Summative assessments were moderated to ensure rigour and accuracy. Whilst English notebooks had helpful 'next steps' comments, this was not the case in most subjects. There was an inconsistency in the use of student self- and peer-assessments. The school produced considerable amounts of assessment data and analysed it in depth, but it was not being used well enough across the school to inform planning.

[View judgements](#)

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

Curriculum quality was good across Kindergarten, middle and secondary stages and acceptable at the primary stage. The Kindergarten curriculum had been completely reviewed and redeveloped in line with international best practice. It provided breadth of cross-curricular opportunities for independent and active engagement in learning. The primary curriculum was appropriately planned and offered progression across subjects but lacked opportunities for independent learning. In the middle and upper stages, students accessed a well-balanced curriculum leading to the ICSE examinations. The Arabic curriculum was based on MoE textbooks. Although it was compliant with KHDA requirements, it was not planned well enough to ensure progression. Effective transition arrangements took place between primary, middle and secondary stages. Early primary grades did not link sufficiently with Kindergarten experience to ensure consistency of approach and sufficient progress in learning. The wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs enhanced the experiences for students and supported links with the wider and international communities.

Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students was good at Kindergarten and acceptable across the other stages. In Kindergarten, the curriculum was modified to meet the needs and interests of almost all students, including those with special educational needs (SEN). However, this was not always done consistently enough across the other stages for SEN or for more able students. The Arabic curriculum lacked appropriate modification to address the different needs and abilities of all students. Across the school, students took part in a variety of experiences and were able to make appropriate subject choices.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The provision for health and safety in the school was outstanding with thorough and effective systems in place to ensure the well-being of all students. School transport was well planned and detailed procedures ensured safe transportation between home and school. The school had a well-resourced clinic, staffed by two full-time nurses and a full-time doctor. The doctor and nurses provided excellent care for students' minor ailments and injuries as well as guidance to students and their families on healthy living. Two counsellors were employed to support social development and students with special educational needs. All classrooms were clean, spacious and accessible to all students. There were very efficient systems for monitoring and recording all aspects related to health and safety. Students were well supervised, at all times. All staff and students were aware of the child safety procedures and new teachers were appointed only after careful background checks had been made.

The quality of support for students was good. Relationships between staff and students were also good. Behaviour was of a high standard and was well managed. Students' well-being and personal circumstances were closely monitored and students received good quality individual guidance and support. Guidance on future education choices for older students was developing well and covered a range of options. The checking of attendance and punctuality was effective.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

There was good leadership in the school. The Principal, in his first full year in post, had taken the school forward with clear direction on improvement. He had developed a strong and effective senior management team. Together, they had improved important aspects of the school. The vice principals and supervisors collaborated closely in their work across all stages of the school. Devolved responsibilities allowed supervisors and heads of department to make practical decisions at stage and subject level, and encouraged them to initiate change. However, the Arabic coordinators were not always included in the school's procedures for performance monitoring and management. Nevertheless, positive relationships and close communication by all levels of leadership and management supported shared understanding across staff and students. The leadership had a good capacity and drive to continue to improve.

The school had good, systematic and effective self-evaluation procedures which involved all levels of leadership and management. The senior management team and supervisors carried out regular monitoring of educational provision. The school knew itself well and had correctly identified priorities for improvement in most aspects of provision. However, for some aspects, monitoring was not always done

effectively enough to identify improvement needs, such as in Primary and Arabic provision. Regular audits of the school by members of the Governing Board included evaluating how well key priorities were taken forward. Staff, parents' and students' views and feedback were taken into account appropriately. Leaders had ensured that good quality professional development and training was provided to support the implementation of key developments. As a result, good progress had been made in addressing priorities from the last inspection report.

Relationships with parents and the community were good. Parents were very supportive of the school. They were actively involved through the Parent Association Forum and membership on the Governing Board. The school encouraged parent participation in their children's learning through activities in school and in sharing information on the website. Parents were kept well informed of their children's progress through termly reports and meetings with teachers, although parents said that they would like more information on curriculum expectations. Productive links had been made with local schools and international education institutions to share good practice and support training and development, particularly for kindergarten teachers.

The Governing Board provided good support at a strategic and school level. Senior members of the Governing Body took an active role in decision making and were well informed about the key developments and needs through monthly reports from the CEO and Principal. Parent and teacher membership on the school Governing Board ensured issues or suggestions for improvement were shared and acted upon. The clear commitment of the Governing Body was evident in the improvements that had resulted through financial and management support.

The day-to-day management of the school was carried out well. All staff were suitably qualified and deployed appropriately. Overall, resources were plentiful and supported students' learning across the school however the number of science laboratories and resources was more limited.

[View judgements](#)

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

Monitoring of and provision for students with additional and special educational needs were acceptable across the school. Good provision was made for students withdrawn from classes. Support for others within classes was variable, depending upon the quality of the input of class teachers and the “shadow teachers”. In some classes, students with special educational needs were given similar work to their peers which was often too difficult for them and individual support was limited. Consequently, progress for these

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students was slow. Students either had an individualised educational plan or were included in a group plan. Both types of plans lacked sufficient detail to measure progress and attainment regularly and accurately. The plans did not clearly identify next steps in learning. Consequently, most students made only acceptable progress in the key areas of learning. The range of enrichment opportunities for gifted and talented students was limited in the primary phase and these students did not make the best possible progress. Progress was better in the middle and upper stages.

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	428	29%
	Last year	203	17%
Teachers	69		66%
Students	7		6%

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

The following statements were based on the survey response at the time of the inspection. The above response figures are the most up-to-date and accurate available prior to publication.

A minority of parents and just over half the teachers responded to the surveys. Less than a tenth of senior students responded to their survey. Of the parents that responded, almost all felt that their children enjoyed school and that teachers provided good quality education. Almost all agreed that meetings with teachers were regular and helpful. They considered that the school offered a wide range of subjects and activities. They thought their children made good progress in English, mathematics and science. Fewer parents considered their children were making good progress in Arabic as a second language. Most felt their children understood Islamic values in Dubai. Almost all agreed children were well looked after in school and that they were able to guide their children with homework. A majority of parents felt leaders listened to their views. Teachers agreed that children were well behaved and thought that they treated children fairly. All believed that they modified the curriculum to support them and that, when necessary, children received targeted support outside the classroom. Students said they felt safe in school and that they were becoming productive and positive members of the community.

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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