

# INSPECTION REPORT

## The Millennium School

Report published in February 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT the Millennium School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	<a href="http://www.gemsmillenniumschool.com">www.gemsmillenniumschool.com</a>
Telephone	04-2988567
Address	P O Box 32446, Dubai
Principal	Michael Guzder
Curriculum	Indian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	2,796
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 3rd October 2011 to Thursday 6th October 2011

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## The context of the school

The Millennium School is situated in Al Qusais. The school opened in September 2000. The school had a total roll of 2,792 students, aged three to 17 years.

The school followed the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum and was in the process of introducing the international variant of this (CBSE-i) into five grades. Students were entered for a variety of national and international examinations and the CBSE examinations at the end of Grade 12.

There were 147 full-time teachers, excluding the Principal and a Senior Management Team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. They were supported by 14 teaching assistants. Students were grouped in 86 classes. The student population was almost all of Indian nationality. About one per cent had been identified by the school as having some form of special educational need. Those students received learning support from specialist staff. Other students who needed additional support in specific subjects also attended catch-up classes offered in the self- enhancement programme in the afternoon.

At the time of the inspection, the Principal was in his sixth year in the school and 21 teachers were newly appointed.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

## How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The Millennium School provided a good quality of education. It had several outstanding features, which included outstanding behaviour and understanding of Islam, excellent science in all phases, students' attainment and progress in mathematics in the upper stages of the school, students' high quality speaking and presentation skills and the opportunities provided to develop gifted students' skills and talents. Another positive feature of the school was its excellent caring ethos, safe and happy environment. The quality of teaching was good throughout the school. Almost all teachers had good subject knowledge and the outstanding teacher-student relationships contributed significantly to effective learning. There were, however, insufficient opportunities for students to work collaboratively and solve problems independently and students' individual learning needs were not always fully met.

The school had made outstanding progress towards addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. A detailed action plan had been produced after wide consultation which had led to improvements in Islamic Education, science and language development at Kindergarten. The school demonstrated an outstanding capacity to improve further.

## Key strengths

- The improved attainment and progress in Islamic Education in primary;
- The outstanding behaviour of students, their positive relationships with all staff and the excellent, caring ethos of the school;
- The outstanding performance of students in national and international competitions;
- The wide range of opportunities offered by the school to develop the talents and skills of gifted students;
- The outstanding opportunities provided for students within the self-enhancement programme.

## Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Arabic in Grades 1 to 8;
- Improve teaching and learning strategies to enable students to work more collaboratively and learn independently through investigation and problem-solving;
- Develop whole-school systems to identify all students with learning difficulties and other special needs in order to improve the quality of their learning.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Examination data and lesson observation indicated that attainment throughout the school was good or better in all key subjects, except in Arabic in Grades 1 to 8, in which it was acceptable. In science, attainment was outstanding at all phases and it was also outstanding in mathematics by the end of Grade 12. Students' speaking and presentation skills were outstanding throughout the school, but especially in

the upper grades. In Islamic Education, students' knowledge of Islam was above their age and curriculum expectations. In the primary and middle phases, students' speaking and reading skills in Arabic were limited but, by Grade 9, the majority of students could read texts fluently, copy sentences, take part in short dialogues and write short texts on familiar topics. In English, writing was fluent and well structured in a range of genre in the secondary school. In mathematics, almost all students achieved levels well above international standards. In science most students in the higher grades could do independent work in the laboratory. They were innovative in their development of working projects and could research, organize and present symposiums on topics such as pollution, radioactivity and renewable energy.

Progress in the Kindergarten was good in all key subjects and outstanding in science. In the primary and middle grades progress was good in the majority of key subjects and outstanding in science. Progress was only acceptable in Arabic because students did not have enough opportunity to use the language as a means of communication and relate to real life situations. In secondary grades, progress was good in all subjects except in science and mathematics where it was outstanding. Most secondary students made good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding because they were able to apply what they were learning to real life situations. Students made significant progress, particularly in reciting The Holy Qur'an. Students made good progress in listening, reading and writing English and their progress was outstanding in their acquisition of speaking skills. In science, most students across all grades made outstanding progress in terms of acquiring and applying their knowledge beyond the expectations of the CBSE curriculum. The progress made by students with special educational needs was acceptable overall, but those with individual education plans made good progress. Gifted and talented students made outstanding progress, because of the very wide range of opportunities offered by the school to develop their talents and skills.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Attitudes and behaviour were outstanding across the school. Relationships between students and adults were very positive and effective. Most students made healthy food choices and had well-developed awareness of healthy life styles. Attendance was good at the time of the inspection and previously it was acceptable. Students had an outstanding knowledge of the importance of Islam in the multi-cultural context of Dubai. They understood local traditions and valued their part in the UAE national identity. Students were involved in a multitude of events both in the school and the community. They had won several awards for community service presented by, for example the Department of Health, Emirates Environmental Group and Dubai Municipality. Most students had a well developed awareness of Dubai's economic progress and its position in the world. Students were proud of their school and they took great care of the buildings and its environment.

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Outstanding	Good

Teaching for effective learning was good overall with a few examples outstanding practice in subjects such as English, science, dance and in the Kindergarten and higher grades. Basic skills were taught well. In Arabic, teaching was acceptable overall. Across the school, teachers had very secure subject knowledge that enabled them to plan together for effective learning well. Occasionally, the lesson objectives were not achievable within the time set and this led to inaccurate assessments of students' progress. Teachers worked successfully to motivate their students and most managed the timing of lessons and students' behaviour well. The majority of lessons had a good range of activities and helped students make connections with other subjects. In the majority of lessons, students were not encouraged to work collaboratively and learn from one another. Homework was set routinely and extended students' involvement well. Teachers tried to match work to students' differing abilities using worksheets but in a minority of lessons, these did not cater well enough for those with the lowest ability or those with special educational needs. Teachers often made good use of resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) presentations to capture students' interest and, in Islamic Education, used an electronic version of The Holy Qur'an effectively to engage students. Teachers' questioning was thorough but in a few lessons it did not involve all of the students. A minority of students were too passive in parts of those lessons.

The quality of learning was good overall; it was outstanding in the middle phase. Students took responsibility for their learning well and strove to achieve their best. Their self-organisation skills were good. They worked productively with their classmates, but this skill was in an early stage of development. Students applied what they learned successfully in one subject to new situations, such as using texts about explorers in English lessons. They made regular connections with their class work and real life contexts, for

instance, in science. This approach supported the development of enquiry skills especially in science, Kindergarten, home work and topic work. In the upper grades, Kindergarten and the self-enhancement programme students' critical thinking skills were developing well.

Assessment was good, and especially effective in the middle phase. There was a comprehensive system for gathering, analysing and using information regarding students' progress. Teachers marked work regularly and made comments to support improvement. Occasionally, in Arabic and English for instance, teachers' remarks were not sufficiently analytical and did not regularly suggest ways for students to improve their work.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

The curriculum was of outstanding quality throughout the school. Continuity was ensured by following the Central Board of Secondary Education curriculum. It was carefully monitored for its suitability and effectiveness. The school had further developed the curriculum to increase students' ability to think independently and conduct research. In science, these skills were already well developed and students learned through their own investigations. The self-enhancement programme provided a learning environment which enriched and extended all students' intellectual, spiritual, social, cultural and physical development. Children in Kindergarten benefited from learning Arabic. Through the self-enhancement programme students could experience and achieve in a wide range of sports, arts, technology, music, and creative activities. Students enjoyed success in inter-schools competitions such as swimming, table-tennis, athletics, music, basketball, electronics and robotics, dance and debating. Students with special educational needs were also well involved in these sessions, where they could receive individual help from teachers and older students. Gifted and talented students also extended and developed their interests. There were 'catch-up' classes for students experiencing difficulty in academics. Students who had not been identified as requiring specialist support available made less secure progress.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were outstanding. Staff members throughout the school took their duties of care seriously. Clear expectations and well-established routines throughout the day and on the school buses ensured student and staff safety. Students with physical disabilities had appropriate access to the school. The premises were clean and equipment was maintained in good condition. Fire drills were carried out at appropriate intervals. Medicines and students' personal records were kept securely. The school clinic provided exemplary facilities. Healthy living was reflected in the curriculum and promoted effectively throughout the school. All staff members and students knew about the child protection arrangements.

The quality of support for students was outstanding. Students commented that they felt that staff were approachable and accessible. The management of students' behaviour and personal care was exemplary. A wide range of experiences and guidance concerning future education and careers was available for older students. The checking of attendance and punctuality was effective. There was good provision for the small number of students identified with special educational needs.

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

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

The leadership of the principal and other senior managers was outstanding. They were very visible around the school, especially at times of student movement which ensured that contact with students was close and that the day-to-day running of the school was smooth. They were dedicated to high standards in all aspects of the school. They communicated a common vision that was clear to all staff members. There was a sharp focus on wide consultation and collegial working and a very effective, distributed leadership structure. The quality of the work of almost all middle managers was also very high. Teachers felt fully involved and valued. Relationships and communication at all levels of the school hierarchy were both friendly and professional. This distribution of leadership, effective communication and full commitment of all staff members ensured the achievement of high and improving standards of students' learning and personal and social development.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Systematic self-evaluation processes were well embedded in the schools' improvement planning. Through numerous channels of communication, high quality recording of students' progress and targeted professional development and performance management, the school knew its strengths and areas for development well and had identified its key priorities. The improvement plan was ambitious, reflected thorough analysis of data and provided the school with detailed action plans with achievable goals. There had been significant progress in achieving most of the recommendations in the previous report. The school demonstrated an outstanding capacity for continuing improvement.

Partnerships with parents and the community were outstanding. Parents were fully supportive of the school, especially as they considered it a safe and caring environment where their children were happy, and were helped to achieve their full potential. They believed staff members were very approachable and dealt quickly with any issues. The Parents' Focus Group was a valuable channel for information, as was the electronic platform which served as a communication tool. Additionally, the school regularly surveyed

parents' opinions on key issues. Reports about academic progress were regular and detailed and included the next steps in learning for students. Strong links with the community and other schools were in place.

Governance was good. The governors had a clear overview of and strong commitment to the school. Their monitoring of the school's development exerted a positive influence in leading school improvement. The governing body represented many stakeholders of the school and regularly sought and responded to their views, especially those of the parents. The consultation with parents had recently increased through forums and surveys.

Staffing, facilities and resources were all of good quality. Teachers were appropriately qualified and sufficient in number to cover all classes well. However, large pupil numbers in the lower school classes had a restraining effect on teaching. There were many excellent facilities, including a hall with a quality sound and light system, a swimming pool, well-equipped music, art rooms and science laboratories. ICT resources had been increased significantly. All teachers had been provided with laptops and all classrooms had data projectors.

## 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	1167	56%
	Last year	1688	83%
Teachers	100		68%
Students	267		90%

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

A significant majority of parents responded to the survey, but fewer than last year's response. A majority of teachers and almost all senior students responded to their surveys. In general, parents held positive views about the school and its leaders. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education available and believed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects. A few parents indicated that their children were not getting the education they expected. Most parents believed that teachers made sure that their children's work was improving, but a few did not think so. Majorities of parents and students agreed that there was a good range of subjects, clubs and activities available at the school but a few of each group disagreed. A few parents believed that the homework given to their children was unsuitable and senior students shared this belief. Majorities of parents and students reported that leaders listened to their opinions about the school, but a few of each reported that they did not. Similarly, majorities of parents and students indicated that they were involved in school improvement, but more than a few were not. A majority of parents and most teachers believed that inspection had helped to improve the school. Both teachers and students held positive views about the school overall.

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

## Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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