

**Islamic School for
Education and Training
Inspection Report
Kindergarten to Grade 11**

Report published May 2010

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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.

The Islamic School for Education and Training was inspected in January 2010 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 Al Muhaisanah, the Islamic School for Education and Training is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 11, aged three to 17 years. The school follows a Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. The school includes a residential component that houses orphans from outside the UAE and includes vocational skills courses for older boys and girls. Provision for boys ends with Grade 9, while provision for girls continues to Grade 11. At the time of the inspection, there were 893 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was unsatisfactory but, during the inspection, it was acceptable.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Almost all parents responding agreed that their children liked the school and made good progress in Islamic Education and Arabic. Most parents agreed that teachers treated their children fairly and expected them to do their best. A majority agreed that the school provided a good range of activities that their children found enjoyable. More than a few parents disagreed that the school was good at consulting them on decisions affecting their children, and that they had good information about the progress of their children. Similarly, a minority of parents did not agree that the teachers explained to them how they could help their children with school work. Finally, although most parents agreed that the school had good links with them, more than half did not know how the school had responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection.

How well does the school perform overall?

The Islamic School for Education and Training provided an acceptable quality of education to its students. In Islamic Education attainment and progress across school were good, but outstanding in the Cycle 3 girls' section. Both attainment and progress in Arabic were acceptable in Kindergarten (KG), good in Cycles 1 and 2, and outstanding in girls' Cycle 3. Attainment and progress in English were unsatisfactory in the KG, acceptable in Cycles 1 and 2, and good in girls' Cycle 3. Attainment and progress in mathematics were acceptable across the school. Student attainment in science was acceptable across all grade levels, and progress over time was acceptable in KG through Cycle 1, and good in Cycles 2 and 3. The attitudes and behaviour of the students throughout the school were good. Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good in KG and outstanding in Cycles 1 to 3. Students' economic and environmental understanding was good in KG and outstanding in Cycles 1, 2, and 3.

The quality of teaching was acceptable overall. A majority of lessons observed were of good quality, but a few lessons were unsatisfactory. There was concentration of good teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic lessons. Students' learning during lessons was acceptable overall, and sometimes of better quality. A majority of students were attentive during the lessons observed; the girls were generally more so than the boys. Assessment was acceptable overall. Most students knew how well they were doing in each subject, although the quality of marking varied considerably. The quality of the curriculum was acceptable. It followed the Ministry of Education curriculum; textbooks and workbooks were supplemented by other books and teacher-developed materials. The school also offered a good range of career and technical curriculum programs which provided apprenticeships and future employment opportunities for students. Health and safety provision was good in the KG and Cycle 3, but unsatisfactory in Cycles 1 and 2. Although general health and safety were good, there was evidence of persistent corporal punishment of students in Cycles 1 and 2. Staff-student relationships were good in the KG and Cycle 3, but were also unsatisfactory in Cycles 1 and 2 because of corporal punishment. During lessons and at other times caring attitudes toward students were broadly evident.

The quality of leadership was acceptable. Leaders were competent and committed to the fulfilment of the school's unique mission to prepare teenagers for independence. This vision was shared by teachers and students as well. Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable overall. The school had established a very comprehensive action plan. Partnerships with parents and the community were of acceptable quality, and the school had established links with the local community, including cooperative arrangements for apprenticeships in businesses. Governance of the school was acceptable. The school was accountable to its Board of Trustees and the owners, but not all stakeholders had representation on this board. Staffing, facilities and resources at the school were acceptable. There were sufficient qualified teachers. The KG and the lower grades lacked the classroom assistants necessary to support an effective learning environment. A few classrooms were too small for the numbers of students in them.

Key features of the school

- Provision of a broad range of learning opportunities, including vocational and technical training;
- Good Arabic reading and writing skills of students, in Cycles 2 and 3;
- Outstanding appreciation and understanding of Islam in Cycles 1, 2 and 3;
- High level of personal and social development in almost all classes.

Recommendations

- Improve teaching and learning, so that lessons provide appropriate challenge and a sufficient range of teaching and learning methods to all students in all key subjects;
- Develop assessment methods to include specific knowledge and skills in all key subjects at all grade levels;
- Develop the curriculum to provide different activities for students of different abilities;
- Investigate and address allegations of corporal punishment of students;
- Improve the flow of car and bus traffic, so that student safety is ensured;
- Improve tracking of students' academic and personal progress to support students better in all subjects and grade levels.

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

In Islamic Education attainment and progress across the school were good and outstanding in the Cycle 3 girls' section. In Grade 1, most students could read and recite the short chapters from The Holy Qur'an correctly. They could distinguish between good and bad behaviours. By Grade 5, most students demonstrated solid basic knowledge about Islam. Non-Arabic students could read The Holy Qur'an as well as Arab students. Most of them followed the rules of Tajweed accurately. In Grade 9, students knew the meaning, the conditions, and the due portions of alms giving. By the end of Grade 11, students' attainment was well above the expected levels, both nationally and internationally. All students' recitation was outstanding. They could read, argue and analyse long chapters from the Holy Qur'an. They also showed skills in researching the authenticity of some Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Both attainment and progress in Arabic were acceptable in KG, good in Cycles 1 and 2, and outstanding in girls' Cycle 3. Students in KG developed acceptable levels of listening and speaking skills. They could identify the letters they learned but lacked simple writing skills. Most of the students in Cycle 1 and 2 showed good listening, speaking and reading skills and used classical Arabic fluently. Most of the students developed good writing skills, and extended writing was observed through projects as part of their Arabic classes. Almost all students in Cycle 3 showed outstanding skills in reading complex poems and Arabic texts with

correct pronunciation. All Cycle 3 students were able to demonstrate extended writing above the expected level.

Attainment and progress in English were unsatisfactory in the KG, acceptable in Cycles 1 and 2, and good in girls' Cycle 3. Children in the KG did not know the alphabet orally. Most students in Cycles 1 and 2 understood English questions and directions, and could speak in short sentences with support. Most students could read simple sentences, but doing so often required modelling beforehand. A majority could sight read short sentences with some errors in pronunciation. The majority of students in Cycles 1 and 2 could not write independently. Their written work was mostly copied from other texts. The girls in Cycle 3 had stronger skills in English and could express themselves clearly using complex sentences. The writing skills of the girls were less developed than their speaking and reading skills.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were acceptable across the school. KG children developed the basic skills of counting in sequence and recognizing geometrical forms. From Grades 1 to 10, mathematics skills improved, with older students gaining competence in pre-algebra. Students' understanding of number and their calculation skills were age-appropriate. A significant part of learning in mathematics was practical and effectively developed students' abilities to use the four processes. Problem solving was mostly limited to solving algebraic equations.

Attainment in science was acceptable across all grade levels. Progress was acceptable in KG through Cycle 1, and good in Cycles 2 and 3. Most children in KG and Cycle 1 were able to demonstrate basic science knowledge through identification of animals, flowers, sea life and plants; they understood the concepts of personal cleanliness, recycling, and basic safety. By the end of Grade 6 most students were able to classify plants and animals, other organisms and systems, and use the microscope correctly for investigations. Grade 5 students produced a very good recycling project using discarded products from home and school. Most students in Grades 7 to 9 understood basic concepts in geology, chemistry and biology. They were skilled in conducting limited research, and used electronic presentations effectively. All girls in Cycle 3 applied their more advanced scientific knowledge to research and investigations.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Attitudes and behaviour of the students throughout the school were good. Students practised good self-control in their daily lives in the school, especially in the upper grades. Most students showed good behaviour toward teachers, guests, and other staff in the school. Almost all students arrived in good time for lessons but improvements were needed in the overall attendance at the start of the day.

Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good in KG and outstanding in Cycles 1, 2, and 3. Almost all students showed a good understanding of Islam, which was reflected in their daily lives. They had a good, age-appropriate appreciation of the history of Dubai and talked about different cultural issues and the changes that had taken place. Students were familiar with the different nationalities, and their impact upon the welfare of Dubai's citizens.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was good in KG and outstanding in Cycles 1, 2, and 3. Students talked in detail about the economic developments in Dubai and the changes and progress that had taken place. Students were aware of the recent economic situation and the impact of the global financial crisis on Dubai. They had a very good understanding of the need to protect the environment and talked about matters such as alternative energy, using solar energy and recycling. Students participated in several projects in school and Dubai, such as cleaning beaches and Clean World project, to raise awareness of environmental issues.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was acceptable overall. A majority of lessons were of good quality, but a few lessons were unsatisfactory. There was a concentration of good teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic lessons. Planning was weak in too many lessons and objectives were stated to students in only about half of the lessons observed by inspectors. Most teachers knew their subjects well, but a majority did not employ a wide variety of strategies to address the varied needs of their students. Instead, the majority of lessons were based upon textbooks and workbooks, and thus lacked imaginative teaching. Teacher-student interactions were almost always positive but too many teachers dominated lessons with questions that promoted one-word answers rather than independent and analytical thinking.

Students' learning in lessons was acceptable. The majority of students were attentive during lessons and the girls were generally more attentive than boys. Only a minority of students consistently took responsibility for their learning because teachers provided too much direction and, in doing so, kept students dependent, passive recipients of knowledge. Only a minority of students collaborated on tasks; again, this was better amongst girls. Students were able to apply their knowledge to the real world but the development of their enquiry and research skills was limited, due, in part, to the low level of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) integration within the curriculum. Students rarely asked questions of their teachers and their higher order and critical thinking skills were being developed in only a few lessons in Cycle 3.

Assessment of learning was acceptable overall. Most students knew how well they were doing in each subject, although the quality of marking varied considerably. Most teachers assessed the progress of students daily as part of the teaching and learning process and knew how well their students were doing. However, a few teachers did not notice students who were falling behind during lessons. This was because the school's assessment methods were narrow in scope, and there was no overall assessment policy for the school. The school's records of assessments were rigorously kept but only a minority of teachers used assessment information to plan next steps for their students.

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable in KG through to Cycle 2 and it was good at Cycle 3. It followed the Ministry of Education curriculum and textbooks and workbooks were supplemented by other books and teacher-developed materials. The curriculum was balanced in the academic subjects; art and physical education were also provided. The school also offered a good range of career and technical curriculum programmes that provided apprenticeships and future employment opportunities for students. These included gold and metal working, engineering, food science and interior design. The school provided field trips and excursions to enhance the curricular offerings. In Islamic Education and Arabic, reading and writing was broadened by higher level reference books. ICT students were given the option of taking an on-line curriculum and the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) certification was available at the school. The English curriculum varied; its level of challenge was at times both too low and too high in different grades. In science and mathematics there was a variety of curriculum strengths which provided practical skills for students in class and in the science laboratory. Annual curriculum review and development was the responsibility of the teachers and subject leaders, but there was no overall coordination of the school's curriculum. There was no evidence that the results of their review were used to improve learning opportunities for students. For example, the curriculum did not make special provisions for students of higher or lower attainment levels, except for the addition of Saturday classes and the use of extra worksheets. There was cross-curricular integration in Islamic Education lessons, which included mathematics and science components.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety provision was good in the KG and Cycle 3, but unsatisfactory in Cycles 1 and 2. Although general health and safety were good, there was evidence of persistent corporal punishment of students in Cycles 1 and 2. All school buses had supervisors travelling with the students. However, not all buses were equipped with seat belts and some drivers did not have a list of passengers or the contact numbers of their parents. Security was well maintained by the five officers on duty, as well as by closed-circuit television. Student breaks were well supervised, as were the cafeteria and outdoor activities. Students lined up with their teachers for orderly passage between classes. There was a full-time school nurse in a well-equipped clinic. Medicine was stored securely, and two medical doctors made weekly regular visits to the school. Medical records for students and staff were kept on file and upgraded annually. Flu clinics and presentations were held to promote healthy life styles. The cafeteria provided healthy lunches to students. A few doors for exiting the school building were locked and this constituted a risk to safety in the event of an emergency. The school held an emergency evacuation drill just once yearly.

Staff-student relationships were good in the KG and Cycle 3, but were also unsatisfactory in Cycles 1 and 2 due to the use of corporal punishment. During lessons and other times caring attitudes toward students were evident. The school kept accurate and thorough records of

students' exam scores, but it had not developed a system for tracking the academic and personal progress of all students from year to year. Guidance was available to students regarding their future education and career plans. The school's mission to train students for the work force was being fulfilled. Most, staff members handled behaviour issues well. There was a full-time psychologist to provide support to students and their parents. Students in danger of failing examinations or not achieving their potential were offered free Saturday or vacation time remedial classes. About one-fifth of the students attended by means of a full fee scholarship provided by the school's owners.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. Leaders were competent and committed to the fulfilment of the school's unique mission to prepare teenagers for independence. This vision was shared by teachers and students as well. Most leadership roles were well-defined but curriculum leadership was not clearly evident. Although subject leaders met their section leaders regularly, they worked separately from one another, precluding a shared understanding of the students they taught. Performance management monitored teachers' classroom work regularly, and records were kept to track improvement. The leaders of the school demonstrated the capacity to make further improvements.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable overall. The school had established a very comprehensive action plan. Although it included specific timelines, measures, and outcomes, it was not widely understood by all stakeholders and did not focus on improved learning outcomes through the use of assessment information. Most priorities in the plan had been successfully addressed since the last inspection, with a focus on ICT in the classrooms. Monitoring of teacher performance was a priority, but lesson observations showed that a majority of teaching was of only acceptable quality.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable but the school had not yet successfully shared its plans for improvement with parents. There was no parent council at the school, although some parents demonstrated a genuine interest in school life. The school had procedures for communicating regularly with parents on paper and electronically. There were well-established procedures for reporting to parents and extra monitoring of students' progress when necessary. The school also had established links with the local community, including cooperative arrangements for apprenticeships in businesses.

Governance of the school was acceptable. The school was accountable to its Board of Trustees and the owners, but not all stakeholders had representation on this board. The Board only met yearly to review the operations of the school, and it did not have a focus on improved learning outcomes as a measure of the school's performance.

Overall, staffing, facilities and resources at the school were acceptable. There were sufficient and qualified teachers but a few teachers in the lower grades lacked specialised teaching knowledge. The KG and the lower grades lacked the classroom assistants necessary for an effective learning environment. Almost all staff members were well deployed. The school was clean and equipped to an acceptable level but a few rooms were too small for the numbers of

students attending. A new library formed a component of learning for students but there were too few resources to enhance learning for most students. The provision of ICT for teachers and students was sufficient, but true integration of ICT with learning across different subjects was not fully developed.

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:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Attainment	Not applicable	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress over time	Not applicable	Good	Good	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Outstanding
Progress over time	Acceptable	Good	Good	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress over time	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

How good is the students' personal and social development?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Economic and environmental understanding	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are teaching and learning?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

How well does the school protect and support students?				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Girls Cycle 3
Health and safety	Good	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Good
Quality of support	Good	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Good

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

How well does the school perform overall?
Acceptable

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.

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.

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