

INSPECTION REPORT

Greenwood International School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Greenwood International School

Location	Al Muhaisnah
Type of school	Private
Website	www.greenwood.sch.ae
Telephone	04-3433266
Address	P.O. Box 79595, Dubai, U.A.E
Principal	Rashida M. Badri
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	921
Largest nationality group of Students	Emirati
Number of Emirati students	737 (80%)
Date of the inspection	21st to 23rd January 2013

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The context of the school

Greenwood International School is situated in Al Muhaisnah, and caters for male and female students from Kindergarten through to Grade 12. The classes were mixed gender up to Grade 4 and they were separated from Grade 5 onwards. The school had 921 students on roll, and approximately 80 per cent of the students were Emirati. Others students were mainly from Arab countries, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The school followed a US curriculum aligned with the state of Florida standards. Most high school students chose to take external examinations such as the SAT and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Students from Grades 5 to 9 were required to take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) in the current academic year.

The staff included 82 full-time teachers, supported by 18 classroom assistants, and a large administration and ancillary support team. Almost all teachers held a first degree, and most held a recognised teaching qualification. The Principal had led the school since it opened in 2006. Approximately 25 per cent of teachers were new to the school this year. Fifty students, less than six per cent of the roll, had been identified by the school as having some form of special educational need.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- The high school students' outstanding attitudes, behaviour and understanding of Islamic values;
- The outstanding progress made by Kindergarten children in English;
- The thorough review of the curriculum, resulting in greater consistency of provision across all phases;
- The outstanding arrangements for the health, safety and security of students in all parts of the school.

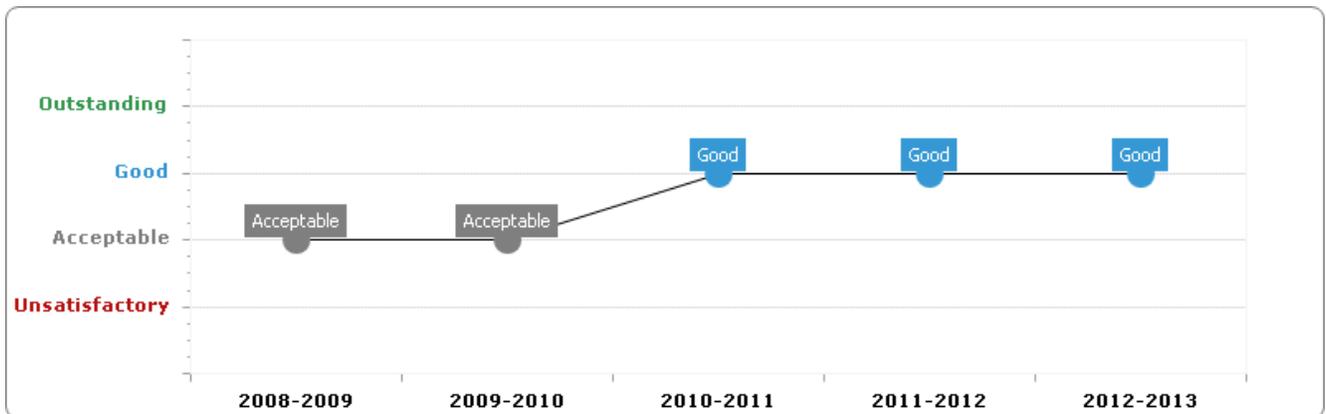
Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Make better use of assessment data across all phases to identify trends, inform teaching and benchmark performance against international standards;
- Ensure that students have access within the school to high quality guidance regarding curriculum choices and career and further education opportunities;
- Ensure consistent implementation of arrangements to meet the needs of all students, including those with special educational needs;
- Consider more fully the students' experiences and educational outcomes in the school's self-evaluation processes.

Progress since the last inspection

- There was better progress made by Kindergarten children in English, and the improved attainment and progress by students in middle school mathematics;
- There had been a number of important developments in the curriculum. The school had aligned the curriculum to the Florida standards and the Common Core Standards from the USA;
- More effective monitoring of academic performance was beginning to have a positive impact upon the students' progress and attainment in a few key subjects.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
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
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment was broadly good across most key subjects. A majority of students in the elementary phase had good knowledge of Islam's values and etiquettes; students in the high school phase, for example, had adequate knowledge of rituals such as traveler prayers and Zakat. In Arabic as a first language, most students could communicate appropriately, however they relied heavily on colloquial Arabic. They had acceptable reading and writing skills. Students learning Arabic as a second language could understand class instructions clearly, and were able to respond using correct sentences. Attainment in English was good across all phases. In the high school phase, the majority of students could initiate and sustain a conversation with grammatical accuracy, confidence and fluency. In mathematics, attainment was good in all phases. Children in the Kindergarten identified two-dimensional shapes and worked with numbers up to 20. Grade 6 students competently divided decimals and fractions by whole numbers. By Grade 9 students skillfully worked out the areas of composite shapes. The use of number and calculations was strong throughout the school. Students' attainment in science was good across each phase with better attainment in Grades 11 and 12. Attainment had improved in Kindergarten through to Grade 5, due to the stronger emphasis on investigative work and experiments in lessons.

Progress was, in the main, good across the key subjects. In the elementary and middle phases, a majority of students made good progress in developing their understanding of Islamic values and etiquettes. Across the school most students made acceptable progress in developing their recitation skills. In Arabic as a first language, most students made adequate progress developing their reading skills. A majority of students learning Arabic as a second language could decode and read unfamiliar texts. There was strong progress for learners of English as a second language in the Kindergarten. In the other phases, the majority of students made better than expected progress in their ability to communicate clearly and with meaning. In mathematics progress was good in all phases. Children in the Kindergarten and students in the high school made significantly better than expected progress in their lessons. The majority of students made better than expected progress in science in relation to their starting points and especially in Kindergarten, due to better access to investigative learning. Gains in progress were especially significant in Grades 11 and 12 due to the application of knowledge to unfamiliar contexts.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development was good in the Kindergarten, elementary and middle phases and outstanding in the high school. Responsible attitudes and good behavior were indicative of well-developed relationships among students and teachers. Almost all students were building self-reliance and confidence. The majority of students recognised the positive impact of healthy eating. Attendance was acceptable. A few students were not punctual to their classes. Most students in the high school had an deep understanding of Islam and had fully embraced the culture and heritage of Dubai. Students participated in multi-cultural events and had a deep appreciation of the wider world. The majority of students were active and committed to building a positive school community. This was evident in the wide range of responsibilities they had around the school. The development of good leadership skills among students was an intrinsic element of the school's mission statement and was promoted through the student prefect system. Students had represented the school at a global leadership conference. High school students modelled a positive work ethic and a strong awareness of global and local environmental issues. The school community had been recognized for its work on sustainable food sources and recycling initiatives.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was good in all four phases of the school. A minority of lessons was acceptable, and a minority was outstanding. Teachers were well qualified and had strong subject knowledge. There were mutually respectful relationships between teachers and students. Shared planning and professional development helped teachers plan their lessons effectively. In outstanding lessons, objectives included challenge and the development of skills. Most teachers maintained high standards and expectations for student performance in mathematics, English and science. Many of them promoted independent research and critical thinking skills.

Learning was good in all phases of the school. Most students enjoyed learning and, as appropriate, took responsibility for their own learning. They worked productively in groups and enjoyed the collaborative projects and activities that were presented in many classes. Students' learning was enhanced when cross-curricular themes were presented. For example, in English, historical literature came to life through students' art, which was displayed appropriately throughout the hallways. Learning was particularly successful when students were able to relate their skills and knowledge to real life experiences. Many students were independent learners and were able to use information and communications technology to enhance their learning.

The quality of assessment was good at the Kindergarten phase and acceptable in the elementary, middle and high school phases. A comprehensive evaluation system, which was based on benchmarks and daily assessments, had been implemented in the Kindergarten. This system promoted independent work, while giving more individual assessment time between child and teacher. Teachers had good knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. They gave feedback to students in a variety of ways including grading homework and tests. They tracked and recorded student progress. However, assessment data was not consistently used across all phases to benchmark performance, identify trends, and inform teaching. Assessment practices were not fully developed to identify special needs and support learning for these students.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was good. A review of the curriculum had led to more effective planning for student progress. Curriculum standards for assessment, based on the Florida curriculum, had enabled the school to improve planning for transition. This was evident in the Kindergarten curriculum, where children developed learning skills from an early age. Subject choice was improved by the introduction of French for Grade 5 onwards. Identification of students with special educational needs had led to modifications to lessons. However, this lacked consistency in terms of meeting the needs of all students, especially those with physical disabilities in some practical learning settings. The range and variety of enrichment activities were a significant strength and engaged the interest of students across all phases and enhanced personal development.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Outstanding arrangements were in place to ensure the health and well-being of students. The premises were secure and students felt safe. Emergency evacuations were well rehearsed and great care was taken when students went on educational visits. Healthy living was systematically built into all aspects of school life. Arrangements for child protection were well established and understood by all teachers. Staff members provided good supervision of students.

The quality of support for students was good. There were very positive relationships between teachers and students and behavior was well managed. The school had established systems that promoted good attendance and punctuality. Teachers knew their students well and provided support for their well-being and personal development. Advice and guidance for next steps in education was provided, although the

school did not have a Career Counsellor. There needed to be further development of advice and guidance for high school students in relation to their subject choices and future careers.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school welcomed students with special educational needs. Procedures to assess individual learning needs and set specific targets for improvement across all the categories of special needs were at an early stage of development. Teachers had received effective training from external providers which was helping them to become better at identifying and supporting students with specific needs. Class teachers and classroom assistants supported students well during lessons. Reluctance on the part of some parents to accept specialist support meant that not all students received the support they needed.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was good. The school Principal showed a commitment to planning and implementing improvements. School leaders were not complacent, and showed good capacity to deliver sustainable improvements. The senior leadership team displayed a strong vision based on best practice. For example, they encouraged the development more varied teaching and learning styles in the classrooms. Consultation between all school-based stakeholders enhanced the school's improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning was good overall. Systems to evaluate performance came from the leaders' frequent monitoring and evaluation to develop improvement planning. The analysis of attainment data to help identify particular aspects of teaching and learning in need of improvement, was at an early stage. Lesson observations were regular but did not always pay sufficient attention to the impact of teaching on learning. This limited improvements for learners. The school had achieved a number of important developments over the last year, but not all recommendations from the last inspection report had been sufficiently addressed.

Links with parents were good and a strong feature of the work of the school. Parents were highly supportive and regularly attended organised events; these made a valuable contribution to the sense of school community. There were effective arrangements to provide parents with information about their children's progress such as report cards, meetings and open days. As a result, the parents gained an understanding of how to help their children at home. The school had engaged in links in the community, for example, to help enhance the curriculum for business studies by working with local commercial organisations.

Governance of the school was acceptable. The Board of Directors was not fully representative of the school's stakeholders. This limited the Board's objectivity and independence in terms of holding the school accountable. However, whilst having little direct influence on decision-making, the Parent's Committee was established to promote parents' views further. The school's website also offered the facility to survey stakeholders' views. Overall the Board had a good understanding of how the school was performing. It supported the school well, particularly in promoting good professional development opportunities for teachers.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. Teacher numbers, qualifications and experience, as well as other members of staff, matched the demands of the curriculum. All were effectively deployed, in particular the classroom assistants. The premises were well maintained; the range of high quality displays of students' work enhanced the learning environment. The library was a focal point and students' benefited from a good range of appropriate books. Some classrooms were small and did not allow students to move around easily. This was mostly due to stored furniture taking up floor space. Where space was available, it generally allowed for good learning and the use of teachers' expertise.

[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	121	26%
	Last year	56	13%
Teachers	50		61%
Students	64		66%

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

Only a quarter of the parents responded to their survey. A majority of teachers and senior students responded to their surveys. Almost all parents and students agreed that good progress was made in English, mathematics and science. In general, most parents felt that their children enjoyed life at school and that teaching and learning were good. This view was shared by the students. Almost all parents and students and all teachers agreed that behavior was good, and that students had a good understanding of Islamic values. Most parents and students stated that teachers made sure that their children knew how to improve. The majority of parents and students agreed that students were actively involved in the community. Over half of the students thought that the choice of a range of subjects, topics or activities was limited. However, nearly three quarters of students felt they could choose from a range of interesting extra-curricular clubs and activities. Almost all parents and students, and all teachers, believed that the school was well led.

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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