

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Bradenton Preparatory Academy

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Bradenton Preparatory Academy

Location	Dubai Sports City
Type of school	Private
Website	<a href="http://www.bradentonprepdubai.com">www.bradentonprepdubai.com</a>
Telephone	04-4493600
Address	Dubai Sports City
Principal	Dr. Michael Gemma
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-17 / KG 1 to Grade 11
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	206
Number of Emirati students	2 (1%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 21st to Wednesday 23rd November 2011

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## The context of the school

The Bradenton Preparatory Academy is located in Dubai Sports City. The school opened in September 2009 and had a roll of 206 students, from Kindergarten to Grade 11. The school had applied to KHDA to expand to Grade 12 for the coming school year. The school followed a US Common Core curriculum. Students sat for the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test, which was in the second year of implementation.

There were 35 full-time teachers, including the Principal and a senior leadership team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. They were supported by six teaching assistants. Students were grouped into 18 classes; three classes at Kindergarten 1 and 2, two classes in Grade 1 and one class each in Grades 2 through Grade 11. Two students, less than one per cent of students, were Emirati. Thirty-seven different nationalities were represented amongst the student population.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

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

The Bradenton Preparatory Academy provided an acceptable quality of education. Student attainment and progress was acceptable across most of the school. However, attainment in Arabic as an additional language was unsatisfactory in the elementary and middle school phases. Progress was unsatisfactory in the middle school grades. Students' attitudes and behaviours, Islamic understanding and environmental understanding were good at all levels. The quality of the teaching and learning was acceptable across all phases of the school. The curriculum was of good quality. Health and safety arrangements were outstanding and the quality of support for students was good.

The ethos of the school was caring and supportive and noted as a strength by parents and staff. The school's action plan reflected progress on the recommendations from the previous inspection report, most notably in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language. Progress was evident in the other key subjects but needed more time to become embedded as regular practice. The school staff demonstrated the collective capacity to continue its improvement in all areas.

## Key strengths

- Well-behaved students who were motivated to learn;
- An improved curriculum which had started to help raise students' attainment;
- The effective approach to reading and writing in the elementary phase which had led to greater student engagement;
- Excellent arrangements to ensure students were well cared for and safe;
- Excellent premises and facilities which supported learning well.

## Recommendations

- Continue to improve attainment and progress in all of the key subjects, especially Arabic as an additional language;
- Improve inquiry-based learning in all subjects, particularly in mathematics and science;
- Improve teachers' understanding of how to use data in their planning to meet the learning needs of all groups of students;
- Further develop information and communications technology (ICT) integration across the curriculum to support learning.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Most students across the school had acceptable knowledge of Islamic key concepts. Most students also demonstrated skill in the recitation of The Holy Qur'an which was in line with curriculum expectations. Few students in middle and high school engaged in more advanced thinking in topics and concepts. Attainment in Arabic as first language was acceptable. Students showed good listening skills using these to good effect when repeating the teacher's phrases. Attainment in English was acceptable and improving.

Younger children made a good start with strong phonics development which enabled them to make expected progress in pre-reading and writing skills. In elementary, progress became more rapid in all aspects of language. Most students in middle and high school were better in speaking and listening than reading and writing but most achieved expected standards overall. Across all stages of the school, attainment in mathematics was acceptable. Most students across the school demonstrated the ability to successfully perform age-appropriate calculations, graph and analyse data, solve word problems and apply geometric and algebraic principles. Attainment in science was acceptable across the school. Performance in science was broadly in line with international standards. Attainment for almost all students was limited by a lack of practical, hands-on activities.

Most students made acceptable progress in Qur'anic recitation compared to their starting point within each grade. They displayed age-appropriate progress in concept development such as cleanliness and purity, knowledge about the Islamic calendar and the voluntary prayers. The majority of students made acceptable progress in identifying basic history of early Islam. Progress in Arabic as additional language was acceptable in elementary and unsatisfactory in middle School. Most elementary students were making acceptable progress especially the more able in the language skills acquisition. Most middle school students made limited progress in the development of speaking, reading, and writing skills. Progress in English, mathematics and science were acceptable. Students met curriculum expectations. Students with special educational needs made similar levels of progress to their peers across all key subject areas.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

Students' attitudes and behaviours were good across the school. Relationships between students and staff and with other students were warm and supportive. Students demonstrated personal responsibility in their class work. They were knowledgeable regarding a healthy lifestyle and accepted the school's criteria for healthy food, even though there was no canteen. Attendance over the last term was acceptable. Students demonstrated excellent understanding of the importance of Islam in the multi-cultural context of Dubai. They appreciated the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and put into practice what they learned from lessons. Students participated in some of local community activities and contributed actively to social and cultural events in school. Almost all students knew how Dubai had developed and most had good understanding of the reasons for these changes. They were aware of the contributions they could make to its growth and economy. Students displayed excellent understanding of environmental issues concerning the wider world. They talked with confidence about possible solutions to reducing pollution, global warming, how to conserve and develop different forms of energy.



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

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

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable across the school. Most teachers had strong subject knowledge but the extent to which they understood how students learn was variable. Lesson plans included objectives, activities, differentiation and expected learning outcomes but were not always followed effectively to ensure students made expected progress. In the best lessons, activities were well paced and ensured the needs of groups and individuals were met. Time was not always managed well in lessons which meant that review of learning at the end of lessons was not always apparent or effective. Overall, teaching was overly teacher-directed but in the best lessons, such as English workshops, teachers interacted well with students through dialogue and open questioning. Nevertheless, weaker lessons were characterised by too much teacher talk and closed questioning which did not lead to good progress. Enquiry, research and critical thinking were not strong features of lessons.

The quality of learning was acceptable across the school with a few good examples in a few subjects. When enabled to do so by the teacher, students collaborated well and often supported each other's learning. However, collaboration was rare in the majority of lessons. Most students were enthusiastic and took responsibility for their own learning when this was facilitated. Application of learning to the real world was variable across the school but was an improving feature. Students made good links with other learning in a minority of high quality learning situations, mainly in science and workshop lessons. Information and communication technology (ICT) was rarely used by students to support and develop their learning.

Assessment had improved since the last inspection. The school carried out regular assessments of student progress in key subjects. Analysis of this information was thorough and had led to changes in teaching and the curriculum. On-going assessment in lessons was inconsistently used to determine the extent of

students' learning. Verbal feedback to students was mostly well developed. There were a few examples of useful self-assessment in a minority of lessons. Student notebooks and regular internal tests were marked but written comments did not always give guidance to students on how to improve, nevertheless, written feedback was a key strength in English. The introduction of rubrics in middle school had helped students to more effectively evaluate their own progress and understand how to improve.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Good

The quality of the curriculum was good across all levels. Extensive review of all curricular areas had resulted in a revised Islamic Education program with a clear rationale resulting in improved attainment and progress in the classroom. The curriculum in English has been re-designed to incorporate a workshop approach to reading and writing. This development had started to have a positive impact on students' attainment in all aspects of English in the elementary phase. The curriculum in mathematics provided for the acquisition of concepts, knowledge and skills. However, it did not provide sufficient opportunities for the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The science curriculum was broad and balanced. The overall science curriculum did not, however, include appropriate opportunities for the development of enquiry and investigative skills and the conducting of independent research using scientific methods. Extra-curricular offerings provided the students with an array of high quality experiences including art, music, physical education and drama. Distance learning opportunities for students were present but not widely utilised.

## 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

Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students were outstanding across the school. The buildings and grounds were well maintained and secure and ramps and elevators available. Furniture was new and appropriately sized for students, particularly the youngest learners. Play areas were ample and there was good protection. Adults, including security guards, were present throughout the day and the students were supervised at all times. Student transport was well organised with RTA certified drivers and monitors on each of the two buses. Monthly fire drills were scheduled and good records kept. An emergency evacuation plan was posted at several points on the campus. The science laboratory had proper safety equipment and chemicals were secure as were the medicines in the clinic. Healthy living was embedded in the life of the school. Students brought their lunches and snacks from home and practiced healthy eating habits. Both the nurse and classroom teachers provided instruction about healthy lifestyles and students participated in physical education lessons on a regular basis. Students made posters and completed projects about aspects of a healthy lifestyle and could explain what a healthy lifestyle meant. The school had adopted a written child protection policy and staff and students knew what actions to take in case a problem arose.

The quality of support across the school was good. Relationships between staff and students were good and in almost every instance characterised by mutual respect and a caring attitude. The small class sizes facilitated the opportunity for teachers to get to know their students well and provide guidance and direction both personally and academically. Career and college counselling was just beginning. Information about college fairs had recently been disseminated, PSAT preparation classes were available and lunchtime activity periods provided a forum for discussion about college and career choices. The monitoring of student attendance was of high quality as was the tracking and management of student behaviour. An electronic student information management system was in place and provided comprehensive data for use by staff. Students with special educational needs were well accommodated and to a significant degree well integrated into the life of the school. They made acceptable progress though the most able students were often not sufficiently challenged in their lessons.

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

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

The leadership of the school was acceptable with some notable strengths. A clear direction and vision demonstrated strengths in curriculum review and modifications. Even though the number of staff was limited due to the size of the school, leaders identified individuals in key subject areas to disseminate curriculum changes through the school. Channels of communication were well established and evident in the school. There was a clear capacity to continue to improve. Leaders were keen to raise standards.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The action plan and devised strategies were shared with all staff and premised on data, demonstrating for the instructional staff the effective use of data to focus and improve student learning. Further work was required to ensure that the recommendations found in the current and previous reports were fully addressed.

Partnerships with parents and the local community were good. Parents reported a high degree of satisfaction with the school in general and particularly with the communication channels open to them. Parents commented on the schools inability to deliver on all of the promises due to the down turn in the economy. Community links were present but limited and needed to be expanded to better enhance the learning opportunities available to students.

Governance was acceptable. The Board of Directors supported the school and met regularly with leadership. The Board also had official channels of communication with other stakeholders and had a parent member who attended and participated in all board meetings. The school leadership was accountable to the Board for the progress of the school. The Board of Directors had recently signed an agreement to turn over the management of the school to a private company.

Staffing, facilities and resources were outstanding. All staff were appropriately certified and supported by an effective professional development model and teachers reported a positive, professional learning environment. Additions to the staff since the last inspection very effectively complemented the

instructional and managerial aspects of the school. The outstanding school facility was safe, clean, modern and maintained to a high standard. The library was well stocked and circulation was high. Additional titles in Islamic Education and Arabic were needed to support student learning further. Computer laboratories were well equipped but under-utilised.

## 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	83	56%
	Last year	86	97%
Teachers	24		83%
Students	14		93%

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

A majority of parents responded to the survey, down from almost all parents last year. Most teachers and almost all senior students responded to their surveys. Most parents were satisfied with the quality of education available at the school and with their children's progress in English, mathematics and science. Progress in Islamic Education and Arabic was viewed as good by only about half of the parents. A majority of parents believed that there was a good range of subjects, clubs and activities available, but a few disagreed with them. On other aspects of school provision parents held positive views, as did the teachers and the senior students. Most teachers believed that inspection had led to improvements at the school and in their own teaching practices.

## 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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