

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Bradenton Preparatory Academy

Report published in April 2013

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Bradenton Preparatory Academy

Location	Dubai Sports City
Type of school	Private
Website	www.bradentonprepdubai.com
Telephone	04-4493600
Address	Dubai Sports City
Principal	Ned Forney
Curriculum	US
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades	4-17 / Kindergarten to Grade 11
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	273
Largest nationality groups of Students	North American and European
Number of Emirati students	2 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	12th to 14th November 2012

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## The context of the school

Bradenton Preparatory Academy is located in Dubai Sports City. The school's population represented 44 different nationalities. For many students, English was not the mother tongue, though of those students many already were proficient in the language.

There was no single overarching curriculum. The school offered a number of American curricula, being willing to accept newly appointed teachers' familiarity with the curricula offered in different states. A system of baseline assessment and for measuring students' progress had been introduced, but so recently that little comparative data was available.

There were 37 full-time teachers, almost all of whom had recognised teaching qualifications. Senior management comprised the Principal and three vice-principals, who had responsibility respectively for early childhood, kindergarten and elementary stages, and high school. A few teachers did not have academic qualifications directly related to the subjects which they taught. Twenty teachers, or 54 per cent, had joined the school within the three months preceding the inspection.

The school roll, taken from Kindergarten through to Grade 11, had risen by approximately 25 per cent since the previous inspection. Classes were small: a number contained fewer than ten students.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

## Key strengths

- The improvement in Islamic Education and Arabic as second language at various stages, in English at Kindergarten and in science at middle and high school;
- The introduction of a recognized assessment scheme to provide regular information on attainment and progress;
- The attention paid to students' health, welfare and well-being, and students' behavior;
- The good identification of students with special educational needs.

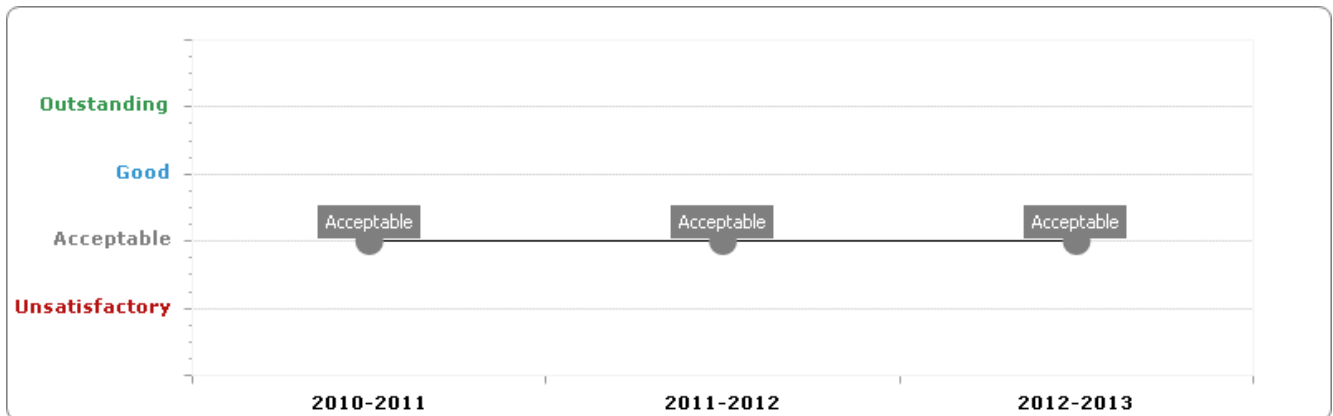
## Recommendations

- Ensure that attainment is raised through increased academic rigor, higher demand in class, more appropriate pace in lessons and greater challenge at all stages;
- Establish a coherent well-defined curriculum which will ensure progression through the school;
- Take appropriate measures to improve attendance, especially at Kindergarten;
- Improve communication with parents and ensure that parents' concerns about academic performance are appropriately and fully addressed.

## Progress since the last inspection

- The school has introduced an assessment system to provide information on baseline assessment and to track progress;
- Improvement in certain stages in students' achievement in Islamic Education, Arabic, English and science;
- Limited progress in addressing the other three recommendations from the previous inspection.

## Trend of overall performance



## 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	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Good	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	Good	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

## 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

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[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	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment was broadly acceptable. In Islamic Education, students' recitation skills were strong. They applied moral values and Islamic concepts to their real lives well. Fiqh law and Islamic etiquettes were underdeveloped. Students' speaking and reading skills were acceptable in Arabic as a first language. Writing skills and grammar developed more slowly, as did listening skills in Arabic as an additional language. Students spoke and read familiar words to an age-appropriate level, but writing skills were not sufficiently extended. In English, students' writing was not as strong as other language skills, with many errors in presentation and in grammar throughout the school. The attainment of most students was acceptable in mathematics. The exception was in one Kindergarten and one Grade 2 class where attainment was good. In science, students in middle school developed good scientific and problem-solving skills and a clear understanding of scientific concepts.

Progress varied, but was mainly acceptable. In Islamic Education, progress in using The Holy Qur'an as a source of evidence was limited. Students of Arabic as a first language rarely enhanced their skills through reading and writing. In Arabic as an additional language, the development of listening was hindered by too much use of English during lessons. Progress in listening and reading in English was particularly strong in the Kindergarten. In the instances where students understood the concepts underlying mathematical operations, progress was good. High school students, many new to the school, made rapid progress in developing scientific skills.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students across all phases demonstrated good attitudes and behavior. Most showed self-reliance and respect for other students, teachers and support staff. Most students across all phases chose to eat healthy food during breaks and lunch and to exercise regularly. Attendance was only acceptable, with Kindergarten attendance erratic. Students had a clear understanding of Islamic values, local culture and global awareness. They appreciated the heritage and local traditions of the UAE and could explain their relevance to people in Dubai. They had a good appreciation of a variety of cultures, and could provide details and examples. Student's opinion had some effect upon the school's development. Their involvement with the local community was irregular. They enjoyed work but many lacked initiative, often relying on others when making decisions.

They could be creative and enjoyed taking part in projects but rarely took the lead. Students took care of their surroundings and were aware of some environmental issues.

[View judgements](#)

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

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable across the school, except for science in the middle and high school where it was good. Teaching at Kindergarten in English was also good. Most but not all teachers knew their subject well and planned lessons using resources appropriately. Most lessons were over directed. Most teachers' questioning was limited and did not promote students' independent learning skills. Only in a minority of cases did teaching strategies attempt to address the needs of individual learners while also challenging students at an appropriate level. Attempts to incorporate critical thinking skills were inconsistent.

The quality of learning was acceptable across the school with a few good examples in a few subjects and grade levels. These included science in middle and high school and English in Kindergarten. Most students generally adhered to teacher instructions and tended to be passive learners. The majority worked well without close supervision. Others appeared to lack understanding of the relevance or application of the information that they were expected to learn. Most students worked well in small groups but did not understand their individual roles and responsibilities as team members. Contributions were not equitably distributed and some students tended to dominate group work. Generally, information and communications technology (ICT) was not an integral part of the learning process. Students used ICT minimally across the subjects. Most demonstrated age-appropriate skills. Critical thinking was not well enough developed.

Assessment systems were acceptable. In science, in middle and high school, assessment was good. Senior leaders were beginning an analysis to identify learning patterns and areas for development. Most teachers had a general knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses. They attempted to structure learning according to student needs, but the effect was inconsistent. Students had to rely on oral feedback. Written feedback and suggestions on how to improve were at a superficial level.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable across all phases. It did not have a clear rationale, being aligned with a variety of standards and programmes. In Kindergarten, the delivery of the curriculum provided limited opportunities for children to explore and learn through play. In the other phases of the school, there was an overlap of Islamic Education with other subjects on the timetable, which restricted some students' full participation in the expressive arts and physical education. Curriculum maps and unit plans were not used consistently across the phases to facilitate and ensure continuity and progression. The curriculum was reviewed during the self-evaluation process, and the need for possible future changes noted. It was not always adapted well to meet the needs of all students. It did not consistently provide good challenge. The lack of appropriate challenge impacted adversely upon students' attainment and progress.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school provided a safe environment for learning. Effective procedures were in place to ensure students' health and safety. Students indicated that they felt safe. The school offered medical support with very well equipped medical facilities. Students were attentive to their own safety, health and well-being. The school promoted a healthy lifestyle and provided a healthy food option. However, it did not insist upon the use of sunhats, particularly for children of a young age. There was an extensive, detailed policy for child protection. All teachers were made aware of procedures and the chain of referral should any incident occur. Training in child protection was thorough and offered to all new teachers. Relationships between staff and students were courteous and respectful. Behavior was well managed and most classrooms were calm and orderly. Adequate systems were in place to promote attendance and punctuality, but teachers were not rigorous in ensuring that registers were filled in promptly and that students arrived punctually to lessons. Students were known individually to staff and their well-being was monitored carefully, both formally and informally. Careers guidance for older students and counseling were good.

[View judgements](#)

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

Effective systems were in place to identify students with special educational needs. Targets for improvement were specific and progress towards them was reviewed regularly. Students made good progress in withdrawal lessons aimed at improving their English, but this was available to only a few. Parents were involved fully and good use was made of visiting specialists. Progress in mainstream lessons was only acceptable because teachers rarely modified teaching and the curriculum to meet fully the needs of these students.

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

The Principal had a clear vision for the school: the pursuit of excellence. The school had no structure to allow leadership at subject level, and so teachers had no clear direction in their development of literacy and numeracy throughout. Leaders were aware that much needed to be done to support the school's development and corporate morale, but they had not been sufficiently active in supporting subject areas themselves. They had not shown sufficient leadership in steering the curriculum towards a coherent and cohesive whole.

The school's self-evaluation process was based on frequent observation of classes and subsequent discussion with teachers. Senior managers did not have a complete picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and evaluated key aspects of the schools' work too optimistically. Almost all staff development was provided by in-house training, with little additional input from the cutting edge of current practice. While some progress had been made in tackling the recommendations of the previous report, none had been fully addressed.

Links with parents were not entirely productive. The school's attempt to produce a regularly updated electronic communication system had not been successful. Some parents preferred regular bulletins each week. The parents agreed that the school's open-door policy facilitated access to teachers, and they stated that the school would address their concerns, particularly if they were about social or emotional issues. However, some felt that the school did not deal effectively with their anxieties about academic progress. A few stated that the curriculum lacked substance and organization.

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The Board of Directors received regular reports, but their analysis of the school's activities was insufficiently effective to allow them to offer focused support to take the school further. The Board had yet to hold the Principal fully to account to substantiate his claim that he was in pursuit of excellence. They had not yet undertaken a critical review of the effect of the fragmented curriculum on students' attainment, or of students' preparedness for entry into another educational establishment. The Board had one representative from parents and one from business.

Although the operation of the school ran smoothly most of the time, there were some examples of infelicitous timetabling. In some instances it was clear that what was timetabled was not actually delivered, making it difficult to ensure appropriate balance in the curriculum. While most staff had teaching qualifications, not all had specialist subject expertise. The premises were of high quality and very well maintained. Resources were plentiful and readily available, though some teachers and parents complained of a recent downturn in resource provision.

[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	82	42%
	Last year	83	48%
Teachers	16		43%
Students	19		95%

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

A feature of responses to the parental survey was the high proportion of 'don't know' to a number of questions. Some 50 per cent of parents indicated that they did not know enough about communication between school and home to be able to make either a positive or a negative statement. Overall, however, in the written responses there was a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of education provided. All 19 students agreed that they received a satisfactory quality of education. Likewise, all students agreed that leadership was effective. A few teachers expressed concerns about the quality of professional development and about a downturn in resourcing. The opinions expressed by parents interviewed were less positive. Parents expressed concerns about the lack of academic rigor and progression, and a significant minority stated that the school had not consistently delivered what it had promised.

## 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)



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