

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Al Ittihad Private School - Jumeirah

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, [info@khda.gov.ae](mailto:info@khda.gov.ae), [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae)

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Ittihad Private School - Jumeirah

Location	Jumeirah
Type of school	Private
Website	No website available
Telephone	04-3945111
Address	PO Box 37090, Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Nehad Saeed Al Shamsi
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	1,843
Number of Emirati students	1,610 (87%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 20th to Thursday 23rd February 2012

## Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2011-2012 .....	3
How has the school progressed since the last inspection?.....	3
Key strengths .....	4
Recommendations.....	4
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects? .....	5
How good is the students' personal and social development? .....	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment? .....	8
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students? .....	9
How well does the school protect and support students? .....	10
How good are the leadership and management of the school? .....	11
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	13
What happens next?.....	14
How to contact us .....	14
Our work with schools .....	15

## The context of the school

Al Ittihad Private School is located in Jumeirah. At the time of the inspection, 1,843 students were enrolled, most of whom were Emirati. The school delivered a US curriculum aligned the state of Connecticut standards. Students wrote examinations for a High School Diploma, SAT university entry tests and International Benchmark Tests (IBT).

The school was at candidate stage for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and The Council of International Schools (CIS). 150 teachers were employed. Almost all had appropriate teaching qualifications.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

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

The overall performance of Al Ittihad Private School – Jumeirah was good. Improvements to the quality of the curriculum and higher expectations had helped drive school improvement. Strong leadership had directed this change and enhanced the experience of most learners. Teaching, learning, and students' progress had improved as a result of the developments. Assessment was good in Kindergarten. Across the rest of the school, it was still did not directly informing teachers' strategies to appropriately support the highest attaining students in particular. The use of external international benchmarks had started in key phases of the school.

The school had improved in many aspects of its work. Leaders demonstrated good capacity to continue to improve the quality of outcomes for all students.

## Key strengths

- There was improved quality and consistency in the progress made by students across the school;
- Almost all students behaved well and high school students had an outstanding appreciation of Islam, local traditions and cultures;
- Teaching for effective learning was good across all phases of the school;
- The alignment of the curriculum with Connecticut standards had resulted in higher expectations for all students;
- Strong and committed leaders demonstrated a good capacity to accurately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plan for continuous improvement.

## Recommendations

- Further develop the promotion of independent learning and critical thinking skills across the school;
- Ensure that assessment information is used consistently and effectively by teachers to meet the needs of different groups of learners;
- Consolidate initial work to enable all graduates to have access to and information about US college entry requirements based on Connecticut expectations;
- Develop the role of a wider range of stakeholders in the governance of the school.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
<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	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Good
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Good	Acceptable

Attainment was good in Islamic Education, Arabic and English. In mathematics and science, students achieved well in relation to knowledge though their capacity to apply their learning using specific scientific skills was underdeveloped. In science in particular, the majority of students did not display appropriate scientific skills nor good and accurate measurement skills. In Kindergarten and in high school, a majority of students had improved their problem-solving skills but these skills were less secure in the primary and middle school stages. Students' language skills were broadly good and they demonstrated a strong capacity to memorise and recite in Islamic Education. The school did not regularly review the attainment of students in key subjects against appropriate international standards. Consequently, students' skill development was not always secure or consistent.

Progress was good in almost all subjects and phases of the school. Students progressed well in lessons and over time. In all subjects the majority of students displayed sound understanding, broad knowledge and completed assigned tasks co-operatively and independently as required. Students with special educational needs made good progress along with their peers. This was due to their successful inclusion in each lesson and their full participation in school activities. Gifted and talented students did not consistently make good progress. Too often their progress was limited because activities lacked challenge and did not support their acquisition of skills.

## 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	Outstanding
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

Attitudes and behaviour were good across all stages of the school. Almost all students in the school were courteous and respectful to each other, to their teachers and visitors. Positive attitudes were reinforced by activities such as class presentations and awards at assemblies. Most students followed a healthy lifestyle, but a few teenage students still needed support in this area. Kindergarten children displayed excellent behaviour but needed more opportunities to develop initiative and independence. The development of an understanding of Islam and its place in Dubai society was good amongst almost all students. They valued the richness of the multi-cultural society and some suggested ways of improving it further. There were excellent activities to support these values, such as a Holy Qu'ran memorization competition and a multi-cultural day in high school. Most students took part in some sort of fund-raising, community service or environmental activities. The Eco-Rangers, in particular, were involved in numerous actions to improve the environment in Dubai and beyond. All students showed respect and consideration for others and many were concerned about the environment.

## 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

The quality of teaching had improved since the last inspection and was good at all stages. Positive relationships between teachers and students helped lessons to proceed without disruption and this helped ensure good pace. Most teachers organised their lessons effectively. The majority of teachers had begun to gain confidence supporting the students' development of independence in their learning. The best teaching observed across the school helped students to make connections between subjects and with earlier learning. It involved students learning actively with teachers using skilful questioning to challenge students to be accurate and detailed in their responses. A few children in Kindergarten were taught through over-formal strategies rather than play-based inquiry. Where teaching was less strong, teachers dominated the lessons and did not respond effectively to the comments and responses of students. This limited progress in lessons, particularly for the higher ability students. Teachers regularly used the internet and data projectors to engage students, but the use of information and communication technology was not a central feature of teaching across the school.

The quality of students' learning was good. Almost all students had positive attitudes towards their learning. They worked enthusiastically and were able to sustain concentration and effort throughout most lessons. In some subjects, such as Islamic Education, Arabic, and English, students were able to learn by collaborating with other students. When this was combined with opportunities for students to develop their independent learning skills, and experience inquiry-based learning, students were able to show their best learning. This was a developing practice across the school. The development of skills was a variable feature across the school. Research skills were better developed, with Kindergarten children learning how to search the internet effectively and the majority of students using the library efficiently.

Information gathered from well-established and systematic assessment procedures in Kindergarten was used effectively to identify children's starting points and plan learning accordingly. Across the school, teachers had a good knowledge of how individual students were progressing, frequently engaging them in assessing their own work. Their use of this information to plan work in lessons which had a suitable level of challenge, particularly for the more able students, was inconsistent. The quality of feedback to students through marking was generally acceptable but too variable across subjects. Each department collected assessment data and leaders had started to use this information to gain a picture of students' progress through grades and over time. This was well developed in English but at a very early stage in other subjects.

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

	KG	Elementary	Middle	High
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good	Good

The curriculum was good across all phases. It was based on Connecticut standards in English, mathematics, and some other subject areas, while Islamic Education and Arabic and followed Ministry of Education standards. The curriculum had a clear rationale and provided good challenge, progression and interesting learning experiences for almost all groups of students. It was designed to ensure good balance between creative, physical and practical experiences. The curriculum was well planned which helped to make student's transition between phases smoother. It was regularly reviewed and appropriately updated. However, the impact of this on students' academic attainment and their personal and social development was inconsistent. The curriculum was enriched to meet the needs of almost all groups of students. Nevertheless, the programmes for gifted and talented students were still basic. A number of cross-curricular links were developed in some school phases. The school's new curriculum supported its vision, mission, and values by providing students with learning opportunities that developed their social sense of responsibility along with their pride in their national identity. Extra-curricular activities were well-developed, yet not utilized enough by students due to some existing restrictions.

## 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

The health and safety aspects of the school were outstanding. The school provided a very safe and secure environment for all students. The building and all of the equipment were well maintained and safe. A review of school lunches resulted in a change in catering services. An electronic data system for medical information was available to monitor medical needs. Healthy lifestyle choices were well managed. All students were encouraged to consider how their decision-making skills impacted directly upon them and their health. All staff had good understanding of their child protection responsibilities and there was an excellent awareness of school protocols. Plans were in place to increase the levels of security and safety even further.

The quality of support was good for all students. A Career Day and multi-cultural programme complemented after-school and student-led programmes to support well-being and overall personal development. An informal counselling program for students with special educational needs was available but alternative strategies at the middle and high school were still developing for students with instructional and behavioral needs. The school was careful and precise in its management of attendance and punctuality and was supporting families that found this aspect of school life a challenge.

## 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

Leadership and management were good. Strong and committed leaders had communicated a clear vision based on continuously improving the educational outcomes for all students. A new leadership structure had been introduced and this effectively distributed responsibility across phases and subjects. Positive relationships were in place which led to cohesive and informed management practices. Leaders demonstrated a strong capacity to improve the school further and were very committed and motivated to do so.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. A system was in place to ensure that the school knew itself well. It identified areas for development using aspects of its work that were performing well. Comprehensive monitoring and mentoring of all teachers were established and good curriculum design had supported this work effectively. Action and development plans identified how best to move whole school performance forward with an effective focus on assessment, governance and health and safety. The school had addressed the recommendations from the previous report well, particularly in relation to expanding teachers' skills, prioritizing learner-centred activities and enhancing curricular provision.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good, overall. The school had good relationships with parents, involved them in school events and in reading activities. Parents were a regular feature about the school. Communication between home and school was regular and comprehensive. It focused on the progress made by each student. Effective community links were in place that emphasised charitable work, environmental and economic understanding and building social links for the immediate area around the school.

Governance was acceptable. A committed and informed executive board was in place that held the senior leaders to account, knew the views of the stakeholders well, especially the parents and had a keen focus on raising standards. Communication with the wider school community and links with stakeholders required further development.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources were good. The school ensured that all procedures and routines were efficient and well understood by the school community. All staff members were suitably qualified and effectively deployed. This was particularly so in Kindergarten where each classroom had sufficient levels of adult support for the work of the children in this section. A purposeful professional development programme was in place. The premises were extremely well maintained, lessons were resourced appropriately and supported teaching and learning effectively. Students' use of ICT was somewhat underdeveloped. Libraries had ample stock and were regularly updated.

## 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	223	22%
	Last year	280	17%
Teachers	62		43%
Students	221		46%

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

A minority of parents, students and teachers responded to the on-line survey. Most views were positive reflecting general satisfaction with the quality of education. Most felt teaching was good, leadership was effective and that guidance for future education was appropriate. A majority of parents were happy with communication quality, their knowledge of next steps and standards of behaviour. Most parents and students felt progress in Islamic Education and English was good. A majority were happy with progress in Arabic, mathematics and science. A significant majority of students were less than satisfied with the range of and access to extra-curricular activities. A few students were unhappy with the school's approach to healthy living. Most parents were pleased with the community links, safety levels, their involvement in school life and homework quality. Most teachers felt part of a professional learning community.

## 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.

## Copyright © 2012

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school.

It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.