

INSPECTION REPORT

Arab Unity School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Arab Unity School

Location	Al Mizhar
Type of school	Private
Website	www.arabunityschool.com
Telephone	04-288-6226
Address	P.O. Box 10563, Rashidiya, Dubai
Principal	Mrs. Sunita T. Budhwani
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / Foundation Stage 1 to Year 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	3,177
Largest nationality group of Students	Asian
Number of Emirati students	99 (3%)
Date of the inspection	Sunday 3rd to Thursday 7th March 2013

Contents

The context of the school.....	3
Overall school performance 2012-2013	4
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
Progress since the last inspection	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of students?	8
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	8
How well does the school provide for Emirati students?.....	10
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	13
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	15
What happens next?	16
How to contact us	16

The context of the school

The Arab Unity School, located in Al Mizhar, is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to Post-16, aged three to 17 years. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 3,177 students; predominantly Asians, and three per cent were Emiratis. Thirty-four nationalities were represented among the student population. Almost two per cent of students had been formally identified as having some form of special educational need (SEN).

The school followed the National Curriculum for England and Wales, based on the Cambridge International Programme. Students completed the International General Certificate of Education (IGCSE) in Year 11 and Advanced Level (AS and A-Level) examinations in Year 12.

Students were grouped into 127 classes. Nearly half of all students were in the primary phase. Thirty-five per cent of the 195 teachers held a teaching qualification. They were supported by a team of nine teaching assistants. Around one third of the teachers had joined the school in the current academic year.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The children's good attainment and progress in the Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching, learning and assessment;
- Students' good and improving external examination results in the secondary and Post-16 phases;
- Students' good attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language in the primary phase;
- The good personal and social development of the students in all phases of the school.

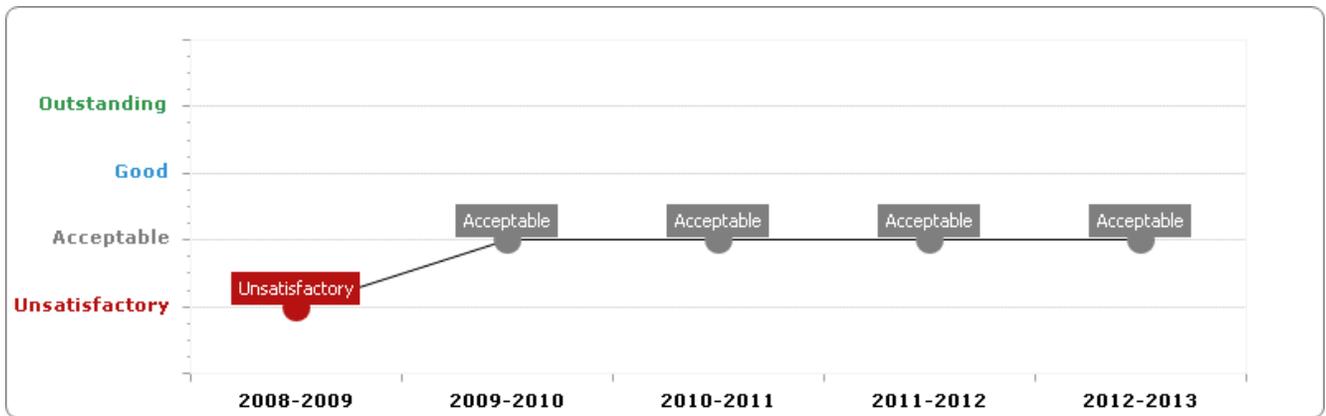
Recommendations

- Continue to improve students' attainment and progress in all key subjects by employing more effective teaching strategies to engage all learners;
- Provide Primary teachers, SEN staff and teaching assistants with training to more effectively deliver the English reading and writing skills programme;
- Make better use of assessment data to track students' attainment and progress, inform teaching and measure learning against the curriculum and international standards;
- Continue to develop the identification and assessment of students with SEN and improve the effectiveness of provision;
- Further improve the quality of action plans by including specific learning outcomes, more realistic time scales and detailed training requirements.

Progress since the last inspection

- There was improved attainment by students in the primary phase in Islamic Education;
- There were improving external examination results in the secondary and Post-16 phases.

Trend of overall performance



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
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	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
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	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language were good in the primary phase and acceptable elsewhere. Students in the primary phase demonstrated good knowledge of Islamic beliefs and worship. In Arabic as a first language, students' language skills on the whole were in line with expectations. In the primary, students expressed themselves with confidence. In Arabic as an additional language in the primary phase, listening skills were strongest. In English, mathematics and science, attainment was good in the Foundation Stage, secondary and post-16 phases, and acceptable in the primary phase. Reading, speaking and listening skills matched age-related expectations in the primary phase but were above expectations in the other phases. There was a gap between students' writing and other skills, which remained as students moved through the school. Weaknesses in comprehension adversely affected the performance of most students. Children in Foundation Stage and primary mathematics demonstrated sound skills in numbers and calculations. In the secondary and Post-16 phases, well-developed numeric and algebraic skills were applied to solve problems. In science, in the Foundation Stage, most children investigated, made observations and talked about similarities and differences. However, across the rest of the school, investigative and critical thinking skills were under-developed. Attainment in external examinations was good in all science subjects. In the primary and secondary phases, students' understanding of the nature and processes of scientific enquiry was insufficiently developed.

Primary and secondary phase students demonstrated good progress in Islamic Education lessons. In primary phase Arabic, both as a first and as an additional language, most students made better progress in all four aspects of language than their counterparts in the secondary phase. In English, science and mathematics progress was good in all phases except primary where it was acceptable. In mathematics, Foundation Stage children's confidence grew as they excelled in practical contexts. Progress slowed in the early primary years, then generally improved through higher phases, with results in all external examinations showing positive trends. In science, the primary phase students did not effectively build on the scientific skills of enquiry developed in the Foundation Stage. From the primary years onwards, students made better progress in developing practical experimental skills than in developing investigative skills.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

In all phases, Emirati students' attainment and progress was similar to that of other students. Purposeful and positive behaviour and attitudes supported progress in learning and attainment. Almost all Emirati students were meeting or exceeding expectations in the key subjects. Most Emirati students had positive attitudes to their studies, were well-behaved, and engaged fully in activities with their peers. The career advice available to Emirati students was acceptable. They engaged fully in extra-curricular activities, including sporting themed events. Their learning benefitted from the cross-curriculum references to local, cultural and heritage issues. There was good cross-referencing of the UAE in the context of the Middle East. Emirati parents were involved in the Advisory Board and actively supported their children's learning.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' behaviour and attitudes were good throughout the school. Almost all students behaved well both in lessons and when moving around the school. Most were self-disciplined, needed little supervision and supported one another readily. They were considerate and had excellent relationships with their peers and adults. Students developed an increasing sense of personal responsibility as they progressed through the school. Most girls and a majority of boys had a positive work ethic. School prefects and other senior students made a positive contribution to the general orderliness of the school and the monitoring of lateness. Attendance was acceptable and most students arrived on time. Most students had a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise to a healthy life-style. Almost all students showed a mature understanding of the values of Islam and the cultural richness of Dubai. They respected Islamic values and understood the impact they had on society. Students were developing a deeper understanding of local tradition and heritage. They had good knowledge of the traditions and heritage of Dubai and identified features that changed over time. They described their own cultures and traditions providing details and examples. Most students displayed a good understanding of environmental issues. A student led Eco-group was active in identifying ways the school could contribute to sustainability. A majority of students showed initiative and took part in charitable activities, but links with the local community were limited. Students understood and valued the achievements of Dubai.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was good in the Foundation Stage and the Post-16 phase, and acceptable in other phases. Most teachers had appropriate subject knowledge and helped students make connections to real life examples. They created positive learning environments and planned their lessons effectively. Not all teachers provided tasks that offered sufficient challenge to all ability groups. The learning needs of the higher and lower attaining students were not always well met. Teaching of students with special educational needs was weak. Limited appropriate work or support was offered in class. In better lessons, clear objectives were used to focus students on their learning and to check their understanding at the end of the lesson. The school had undertaken a broad range of teacher professional development opportunities that had been identified in the last inspection. There was a focus on learning and promotion of good practice through model lessons. This was beginning to improve teaching but the impact was inconsistent across the school.

Learning was good in the Foundation Stage and Post-16 phase and acceptable in other phases. Students enjoyed learning but were often too reliant on their teachers. Students collaborated and presented their ideas to their peers with confidence. They needed guidance to develop relationships to real life examples, but were stronger when making connections to previous learning. Students' independence developed as they progressed through the school. Their use of information and communications technology was limited. Critical thinking skills were developed in the upper part of the secondary and post-16, but there were weaknesses in practical and investigative skills. Practical lessons in science were teacher directed and allowed insufficient opportunity for prediction, planning and evaluation.

Assessment was good in the Foundation Stage, and acceptable in other phases. The Early Years Foundation Stage profile enhanced assessments. The school collected large quantities of data but its use for tracking and measuring progress over time was underdeveloped in most phases. Teachers knew the abilities of their students and planned for different groups, but they did not analyse data to inform planning or identify appropriate learning objectives. Teachers' questioning skills were acceptable. Feedback to students was inconsistent with verbal feedback better than marked work. There were few comments to advise students on how to improve. Assessment did not include adequate referencing to the National Curriculum for England and Wales for Years 1 to 9, to support the teachers' monitoring students' progress.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum in Foundation Stage was good. It was acceptable in other phases. The Early Years Foundation Stage programme met the needs of almost all groups of students in a stimulating, enjoyable and caring learning environment. Elsewhere, provision lacked sufficient breadth and balance and options at senior phases were narrow. Good planning developed learning skills, enhanced links across subjects and promoted investigative and critical thinking skills. However, this was not sufficiently reflected in lessons observed. Students were adequately prepared for the next stages of their education. The curriculum was planned to meet the needs of most groups of students. Provision was weak for students with special educational needs, including gifted and talented students. Student-led clubs only involved a minority of students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety provision was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in other phases. The pick-up and arrival arrangements for all but Foundation Stage children students remained ineffective; inconsiderate driving and parking put students and staff at risk. Provision was good in almost all other aspects of health and safety. School bus transport arrangements were well managed. Buildings were well maintained and hygienic. Emergency procedures were good, fire drills were held regularly and accurate records kept. The medical team effectively promoted healthy life styles including, for example, through the Primary Health Week. Only healthy snacks were available at break time. There were procedures for monitoring students' health and providing advice to parents.

The quality of support for students was good in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in other phases. Students' attendance and punctuality were effectively monitored. Staff members had good relationships with their students. Behaviour was carefully monitored and those with behavioural needs were well supported by the two counsellors in liaison with parents. Programmes across the school supported students' personal development and included guidance on health, and well-being. Counsellors provided advice to students on careers and future pathways. There was scope for this high quality individual support to be broadened.

[View judgements](#)

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

There were weaknesses in the provision for students with special educational needs. The recently appointed school counsellors had identified a number of students who were requiring additional support. Effective and helpful support and counselling was available for students with medical or behavioural needs. Not all students identified as having additional learning needs received appropriate support. While the staff had been trained in recognising learning needs, provision was inconsistent. Academic learning targets were too vague. As a result, the academic needs of many of the students with special educational needs were not being met.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good overall. The Principal, senior managers and most subject leaders were committed. They were well-meaning, clear-sighted and shared the vision of the school with all stakeholders. By combining the strengths of the whole leadership team, the school was well-placed to improve overall student learning and progress. The leadership team showed an understanding of the general needs of the school and was becoming more effective in making the changes that were required. There was adequate capacity to improve the school.

The quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning was acceptable. The school improvement plan provided a sound basis for further developments, but performance management procedures and policies were not yet fully and consistently embedded. There was a lack of focus on student learning outcomes. Increasingly, a broader range of stakeholders were becoming involved in the processes. Teaching was regularly observed as part of the performance management system but there was a lack of rigour in linking provision to students' learning outcomes. Adequate progress had been made in responding to a majority of the recommendations of the last inspection report.

Relationships with parents and the local community were acceptable. Communication with parents was good. Parents appreciated discussions with staff on student progress and personal development, and written reports gave supportive information. Through its own students' and parents' surveys, the school sought additional feedback to enhance its development. Links with the broader community required further development in most phases of the school. The impact of such links on the quality of student's learning was inconsistent.

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Governance was acceptable. The School Directors were taking steps to work more closely with stakeholders through involvement with the Advisory Board. This body included invited members from the business and education community, parents, student leaders and members of staff. The strategic and advisory roles of governance were under-developed. They did not yet provide an objective and independent view or hold the professional leadership of the school to account for its performance. Written records of board meetings indicated a focus on the recommendations of the previous inspection report.

School procedures and routines were acceptably managed. The day-to-day life of the school ran smoothly. Most teachers had good subject qualifications but only a minority held teaching qualifications; this, coupled with the high turnover of staff, impacted adversely on the quality of teaching. Staff deployment was effective. Timetabling of over three hours of lessons without a break impacted on students' learning, particularly in the primary phase. Premises were adequate and acceptably resourced, although some classrooms were overcrowded. The school had good computing facilities and almost all staff used laptops and data projectors in their classrooms.

[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	585	26%
	Last year	706	36%
Teachers	88		43%
Students	175		31%

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

Almost all parents and senior students believed that Muslim and non-Muslim students had good understanding of Islamic values and were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. More than half of the parents and students thought that they were making good progress in Arabic. Parents and students, and almost all teachers reported that the behaviour of students was good. Less than half of the students indicated that they were actively involved in community projects. Almost all parents stated that the school reports were regular and helpful and felt that their children enjoyed life at school. A majority of parents reported that the school provided appropriate guidance in future educational and career choices, but almost a quarter of the students disagreed with this view. Over half the students did not agree that the school leaders listened to their opinions about the school. A majority of students agreed that teaching and learning in the school were good, with most teachers and parents reporting that they felt 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

Copyright © 2013

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.