

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Crescent English School

Report published in February 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Crescent English School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	<a href="http://www.crescentenglishschool.com">www.crescentenglishschool.com</a>
Telephone	04-2988866
Address	PO Box 923, Al Qusais, Dubai
Principal	TA Khalifullah
Curriculum	Indian(CBSE)
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	1,460
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 31st October to Thursday 3rd November 2011

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## The context of the school

The Crescent English School is situated in Al Qusais. At the time of the inspection the school had a total roll of 1,460 boys and girls, aged three to 18 years.

Almost all students were from Indian families though a small number had a Pakistan heritage and were well integrated into the school. The school followed an Indian curriculum with Central Board of Secondary Examination (CBSE) course. There was a choice of curriculum after Grade 8 with an option for students to follow the Tamil Nadu State Board courses.

There were 64 teachers. The majority were well qualified. The school had not identified any students as having special educational needs, but this was inaccurate.

Previously identified high staff turnover continued to be an issue which challenged the school. Approximately half the staff had left the school since the previous inspection. The position of Assistant Headteacher had remained unfilled for eight months.

## Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

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

The school's overall performance was acceptable. It offered a safe and caring environment for its students. The students worked diligently and were highly motivated. There was capacity in the school to improve classroom practice; however, weak senior leadership resulted in the school not moving forward as expected. Students' progress was constrained by too many unsatisfactory lessons that did not have a focus on active learning. Recommendations from previous inspection reports had not been addressed in a way that led to major changes in practice. The school's stated vision was "to provide an engaging and diverse education based on academic, social and technical skills that enable young people of Crescent to be prepared for their future and to be committed to lifelong learning". However, the school's progress towards this vision was limited due to repeated failures to develop a shared understanding of good pedagogical practice. The school did not sufficiently recognise the need to support students with special

educational needs in a systematic way. A lack of determination to raise standards was exemplified by the tardy response in filling an important senior leadership vacancy.

Where improvements in students' progress had been made, for example in the primary phase, there were an equal number of weaknesses in other areas, such as the Kindergarten. In this phase, attainment in English and science had declined along with the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. The quality of leadership across the school was unsatisfactory.

## Key strengths

- Students' good progress in Arabic, across the school;
- The good attitudes and behaviour throughout the school founded on good relationships between staff and students.

## Recommendations

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring:
  - that the new lesson plan format is used;
  - that what is taught matches the learning objectives and,
  - active and child-centered learning strategies are used.
- Improve the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all students and is age-appropriate especially, in the Kindergarten;
- Ensure compliance with Ministry of Education requirements regarding Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Identify students who have special educational needs, and plan and implement programmes to meet their needs;
- Improve leadership capacity particularly at senior levels by improving understanding of effective teaching practices;
- Ensure that all leadership vacancies are filled promptly.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Acceptable	Good
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable across the school. Most students had an age-appropriate level of knowledge about the context of historical events and the life of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH). The majority could apply Islamic knowledge to real life but they had only basic understanding of Hadeeth and the verses from the Holy Qur'an. Attainment in Arabic was acceptable throughout the school, although speaking skills were less well developed. Attainment in mathematics showed improvement since the last

inspection especially in the Kindergarten and primary phases where it was good. Attainment in English and science had declined in the Kindergarten and were only acceptable. Most students could listen and read in English but speaking skills and writing at length was limited. Students displayed good knowledge of basic mathematical concepts but a minority struggled to solve problems and could not easily relate mathematics to practical situations. Students in science had a relatively strong factual knowledge but weak scientific enquiry skills. Attainment in science had improved in the primary phase. Performance in external examinations showed some improvement. Arabic across the school and in English across all phases of the school apart from the middle phase was good. The better progress made in English in the primary and secondary phases was due to better speaking and listening skills. Good progress was made in the Kindergarten and primary phases in mathematics. In Kindergarten, students' progress in science had dropped since last year to become acceptable, however in primary, science had improved to good. The progress made by students identified with special educational needs was unsatisfactory. Their needs were not sufficiently well recognised by the school.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The behaviour of students across the school was good. The mutual respect shown by the staff and students was a particularly strong feature. Students felt safe and supported. Students generally followed the school advice about healthy eating and physical exercise. Attendance was acceptable during the previous term and at the time of the inspection. Students had adequate understanding of the basic aspects of Islam. They could describe some of the features of Emirati culture, such as sports, food and clothing. In

the secondary phase, students appreciated the variety and range of Dubai's multi-cultural society, as well as their own culture. Almost all students had age-appropriate awareness of the reasons for the success of Dubai. Students showed a particular strength in their understanding of environmental issues, both local and global. However, there were insufficient opportunities for them to make wider links with the community and to be involved in conservation of natural resources.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teachers were conscientious and hardworking but some had insufficient subject knowledge. Consequently, there were occasional errors in their teaching. Almost half of the teaching staff were new to the school since the last inspection. This had impacted negatively in the Kindergarten. Students and teachers found the delivery of whole-day topic-based lessons challenging. No free-flow of activities were observed. Teaching was strongest in the primary section. Lesson planning was systematic but was not always completed or delivered accurately. Teaching was heavily based on textbooks and lacked a tight focus on learning objectives and outcomes. Teachers did not all manage time skilfully to ensure a good pace to learning. The limited resources available were not always well used. Teacher-student relationships were good. Teachers were very caring but did not have sufficiently high expectations of their students. Teaching strategies lacked variety, relied mostly on oral explanations and consequently the teachers talked too much in lessons. Questioning was narrow and provided few challenges for more able students. A few teachers made use of visual aids and real objects. There was very little tailoring of teaching to meet individual needs and build on students' learning styles. There was little promotion of critical and independent thinking. Good teaching was observed in Hindi and Tamil.

Students were highly motivated and keen to learn. They demonstrated good attitudes and listening skills. They engaged in learning and took responsibility actively during the few times it was permitted. In too



many lessons, students passively followed instructions. No child-initiated learning was observed in Kindergarten. There were few opportunities for students to interact with each other and collaborate. Cross-curricular connections were generally superficial. There was little application of learning to the real world. Students possessed critical thinking skills but had few opportunities to develop them and even fewer to develop enquiry and research skills.

Across all phases, assessment was acceptable. While good systems were used to record attainment and progress, overall these systems had limited impact on curriculum, teaching and learning. There was evidence of extensive record keeping for formative assessment. However, the information from these assessments was not used to inform teaching or the planning of future lessons. Annotation of student workbooks and questioning techniques in lessons generally did not effectively provide students with the information they required to improve their work.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum offered by the school was acceptable in all phases. The curriculum was planned and balanced across Grades 1 to 12. The curriculum did not fully meet the requirements of the Ministry of Education for Islamic Education and Arabic. The curriculum for English in the Kindergarten was appropriate and provided acceptable coverage of language and literacy. Previous reports mentioned Kindergarten lessons which were taught as separate subjects for the whole of the time on one day of the week. This, along with a lack of free-flow activities, had a negative impact on the learning outcomes. These shortcomings had not yet been addressed by the school. The outside play area was not used during the inspection and few classes took advantage of the playroom. The curriculum was not sufficiently focused to meet the needs of very young learners and students with special educational needs.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Health and safety throughout the school were acceptable. There was a qualified nurse and the clinic had adequate resources. School buses were wellmaintained with required certification. The premises were safe. There were regular fire drills. Students' records were kept up to date. The school promoted healthy living by putting emphasis on healthy eating and had fruit breaks for students in Grades 1 and 2. The provision for the care and welfare of students was acceptable but the school had still not effectively addressed the issue mentioned in two previous reports about child protection. The child protection policy was not well developed and staff had not received appropriate training.

Across all phases, support for students was acceptable. Good staff-student relationships and wellbehaved students were encouraged by an effective positive behaviour policy. Students were welladvised and supported through teachers-in-charge, the school counsellor and nurse. There was no effective system in place to identify and provide for the needs of students with special educational needs. Information on future career and educational choices was available but there were no arrangements in place to assist students in identifying their aptitude for different opportunities. Attendance and punctuality were well managed with good procedures for tracking absence and lack of punctuality, but parents were not contacted on the first day of absence.

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

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

The quality of leadership was unsatisfactory. The Principal had yet to develop an understanding of what constituted good teaching and learning. This inhibited progress. The school lacked ambition and drive. An important post of Assistant Headteacher had remained unfilled for eight months. This vacancy had a seriously negative impact on the academic development of the school. There was not enough understanding of the best international practice to begin to raise standards of achievement across the school.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. Little progress had been made in response to the recommendations in the last report. Some improvements had been achieved in Arabic and primary science but too little had been done to establish a whole-school understanding of good teaching and learning. The Principal was too reticent about making value judgments. Self-evaluation lacked rigour. A new lesson observation schedule was now used but was not effective. No overall analysis or judgments on teaching or learning were made and, consequently, the school was unable to determine the overall standards and could not address deficiencies.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. Parents appreciated the good communication systems in place which included the student diary, newsletters and the school website. Staff were accessible. Parents were well informed of their child's progress through the regular reports and open meetings but were not informed of how their child could improve. The parent-teachers association was restricted to just four parents. Many more want to be involved with the school but did not provide the opportunity.

Governance was acceptable. There were some links between the governing body and parents but there was a need to broaden stakeholder representation. The Principal met weekly with the Chairman and Director but information sharing and accountability was restricted by lack of analysis of school performance.

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The school had an adequate team of qualified teachers but a minority had been recruited since the last inspection. A few did not have the necessary qualifications which had a negative impact on the quality of learning. The premises were adequate. Specialist facilities such as science and mathematics laboratories existed, but these were not used effectively. Learning resources were sufficient to support acceptable learning when staff chose to use them.

## 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	230	23%
	Last year	305	31%
Teachers	14		22%
Students	28		31%

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

A minority of parents responded to the survey; fewer than last year. Most parents were satisfied with the school and agreed that their children were getting the education they expected, but a few disagreed that this was so. A few parents disagreed that there were enough clubs and activities available to their children. Similarly, a few parents indicated that they were not involved in the life of the school. Small numbers of teachers and students responded to the survey. Their views were positive on all aspects of the school's provision. Parents and teachers agreed that inspection had led to improvements at the school.

## 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.

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## 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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