

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai Gem Private School

Report published in April 2013

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai Gem Private School

Location	Oud Metha
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dubaigemschool.org
Telephone	04-337-6661
Address	P.O. Box 989, Dubai
Principal	Keith Sedgwick
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Foundation Stage to Year 13
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1,408
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	4 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	4th to 7th February 2013

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The context of the school

The Dubai Gem Private School opened in 1973. It is situated in Oud Metha and caters for boys and girls from ages three to 18 years, from Foundation Stage to Year 13.

The school follows the National Curriculum of England and Wales and students take IGCSE examinations in Year 11 and A-level examinations in Years 12 and 13. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,408 students on roll. Most students were of Indian nationality, but there was a number of other nationalities, mainly Pakistani and other Asians. There were 27 Arabic students, four of whom were Emirati.

The school principal had been in post since 2010. The school leadership team included the principal and three heads of school, one of whom was also assistant principal. Most teaching staff at the school were deployed effectively to support learning. There were teaching assistants in each Foundation Stage class. There were specialist teachers in other subjects including additional languages. A co-ordinator for special educational needs had recently been appointed and was in the process of identifying students' needs and training staff to support students.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

Key strengths

- The outstanding attainment by students in English, mathematics and science in the secondary and post-16 phases;
- The excellent attitudes and behaviour within a harmonious community, resulting in high quality collaborative learning;
- The high proportion of good teaching with an improved focus on learning outcomes in the Foundation Stage and primary phase;
- The strong leadership which had created a dedicated staff, who all worked towards a shared vision of care, quality of support and high expectations.

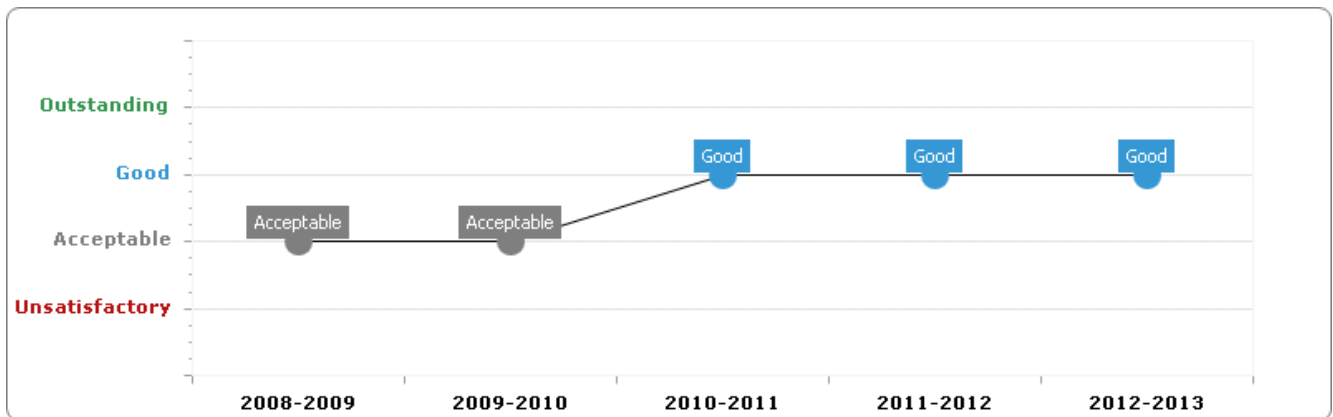
Recommendations

- Ensure that the programme for students of Arabic as a first language complies with the Ministry of Education's requirements;
- Ensure that assessment information is used effectively to meet the learning needs of all groups of students;
- Provide more consistently effective support for students with special educational needs;
- Widen the membership of the School Board, so that it can fully support the leaders of the school, especially in academic and organisational matters;
- Improve the laboratory facilities and equipment to ensure the provision of up-to-date science education and make greater use of information technology across the curriculum in all phases.

Progress since the last inspection

- Teaching and learning had improved and teachers provided more regular opportunities for the development of students' critical thinking skills across all subjects;
- Islamic Education was compliant with the Ministry of Education's requirements and students' progress in this subject had improved in the secondary phase;
- Assessment procedures and the tracking of students' progress had improved, particularly in the Foundation Stage and the primary phase;
- Self-evaluation arrangements had improved and involved a wider range of staff members.

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	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics				
Attainment	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment in the key subjects was generally good across the different phases of the school. It was, however, outstanding in English, mathematics and science in the secondary and post-16 phases. In Islamic Education the majority of students had a sound understanding of Islamic concepts and values and spoke about them with confidence. The school did not provide regular classes for Arabic as a first language, so the students' attainment was adversely affected. In Arabic as an additional language in the primary phase, most students' listening was well-developed; speaking was in line with international expectations. In the secondary phase most students exceeded the curriculum expectations. In English, a majority of students' attainment in Foundation Stage and primary was above international expectation and almost all students in the secondary and post-16 classes had well developed key skills scanning texts, note taking, essay writing and summarising texts. They were also articulate, confident and fluent when making presentations or speaking in groups. Skills and understanding in mathematics were well above expectations for a significant number of students. In successive phases the students showed high levels of proficiency in working with numbers, recognising patterns and understanding the relationship between geometric properties. In the primary phase in science, students investigated scientific concepts and applied this knowledge to the real world. In the secondary years, students could interpret graphic information to establish the relationship between voltage, current and resistance.

Students' progress in key subjects was also generally good. It was, however, acceptable in Arabic as an additional language in the primary phase and unsatisfactory in Arabic as a first language. In Islamic Education students made the most progress in recitation skills. In English, in both the secondary and post-16 phases, most students made significant progress because of their ability to absorb new material rapidly and then apply it in the context of their lessons. In mathematics, the majority of students exceeded the expected levels of achievement because they could make strong connections with previous learning. In science, students learned concepts through regular investigations linked to the real world, which increased their progress. The progress of students with special educational needs was good in Islamic Education and acceptable in other key subjects across all phases.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. Their relationships with teachers and other students were excellent and characterised by mutual respect. Students were self-disciplined in lessons, around the school and during physical activity. They monitored their own behaviour very well so the school was a harmonious community at all times. Students were very caring toward others and showed empathy by leading various activities to support others in need. Students demonstrated independence in their learning and were proud to be ambassadors for their school. Students arrived at school ready to learn, were punctual and their attendance was good. Students understood and promoted healthy living. Students had a good understanding of how Islamic values influence contemporary society and had a secure understanding of its influence on life in Dubai. They identified values such as equality, prayer, respect and order that underpin Islam. They described characteristics that help define Islamic culture locally such as buildings, dress and behaviour. Students' community involvement was outstanding in primary, secondary and post-16. There were numerous opportunities for students to participate in community activities such as collecting for charities and supporting those in need locally. The development of students' independent working skills was excellent. The older students worked together in a relaxed and studious manner. The students' environmental awareness was good in the Foundation Stage and outstanding throughout the rest of the school. There were many opportunities for the older students to become involved in activities that addressed environmental issues.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

The overall quality of teaching was good. Teachers knew their subjects well and most lessons were effectively planned with a range of relevant activities. In the best lessons teachers used challenging questions to draw out students' understanding of what was being discussed or demonstrated. Students were given ample time for reflection in order to think deeply. All teachers had high expectations of their students. Resources were used well in the Foundation Stage to promote children's learning. Group work was a feature of many lessons and helped to promote independent learning. However, the purpose and the assessment of group work activity was not always clearly defined. In the more effective lessons there was appropriate planning and pace to meet the needs of all levels of ability. In the senior section of the school the start of lessons were occasionally dominated by teacher input rather than engaging the students so they could respond to what was being presented. Teaching was particularly strong in English and science.

The quality of learning was good. Students were keen to learn and interacted well with their teachers. This helped create a very positive learning environment in most classes. Almost all students were conscientious

and prepared to work hard. They were willing to take responsibility for their learning, reflect on what they did and to know how they could improve. Students were honest and insightful in their responses to self-assessment. In English lessons students showed confidence and security in their own ideas to promote them well in class discussion. These mature attitudes were also reflected in a willingness to work collaboratively on team projects. This mutual support between students was a strength which had been effectively fostered by the ethos and culture of the school. When students worked together they were able to show clear connections with their prior learning in the subject and to real world contexts. The focus on project work in some subjects provided good opportunities for students to develop independence and promote research skills. The outcomes from the topics showed high levels of creativity and skills in presentation.

The quality of assessment systems and practice was good. The comprehensive collation of data from regular testing helped teachers to monitor students' attainment. The tracking of progress was rigorous and checked students' competence in achieving the National Curriculum levels in key subjects. Teachers had good knowledge of individual students' strengths and weaknesses. In the Foundation Stage, an informative assessment process had been developed to record incremental changes in children's achievement, both academically and socially. The continuity of assessment and tracking procedures in Foundation Stage and primary phases ensured that students continued to make expected progress in accordance to their ability levels. Students had periodic opportunities to complete self-assessment of their work in order to enhance their learning. Marking of work was regular and usually provided encouraging comments, clarified any misunderstanding by students but lacked, on occasions, detailed diagnostic commentary.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was good in all phases. Recent changes had helped teachers provide a more creative curriculum offering more active learning and improved links between subjects. Senior leaders had ensured that the curriculum for Islamic Education was compliant with the Ministry of Education's requirements. Transition between phases was carefully managed and students were well prepared for the next stages of their education. Grade 9 students were offered good support for their choice of options. Teachers made regular use of assessments to help review the curriculum. There was a range of extra-curricular provision including, for example, trips, sporting activities and a variety of schemes linked to charities. In the first term older students had been involved in charitable work during a visit to Mumbai and had raised funds for a school in Dubai for children with special educational needs. The curriculum offered to students of Arabic as a first language did not meet the Ministry of Education's requirements.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety arrangements were good. The school provided a safe and secure environment for students to learn and interact together. The efficient organisation of the buses and travel arrangements ensured safe journeys for all students. Systems for monitoring standards of hygiene throughout the school were thorough and effective. Supervision was discrete but highly effective. Healthy living was well embedded into the life of the school and, consequently, there had been good progress in recent years in reducing the level of obesity amongst students. The ethos of care and concern for every student amongst the staff ensured that the awareness of child protection procedures was good.

The quality of support for students was good because staff members had very good relationships with all students. The school's systems for promoting good attendance and punctuality were effective; however, the students' obvious enjoyment and commitment to their school was a significant factor in this. The well-being and personal development of all students was a strength of the school and there were excellent systems for providing support and guidance for all students requiring assistance and guidance.

[View judgements](#)

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

There were systems in place to identify and support students with special educational needs. The curriculum had been adapted for such students. A few students with dyslexia used information technology to support their writing. There were rigorous systems in place to clarify students' starting points before support was provided. This provided a benchmark from which future progress could be measured. There were effective tracking systems in place which enabled the special needs coordinator to track the progress of students and to share this information with their class teachers.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership of the school was good. The Principal and other leaders were dedicated to achieving the highest standards in all aspects of the school. He set a clear direction and promoted an ethos of academic success in the context of a happy, friendly, family school. The leaders had a strong belief in the importance of mutual support and collaboration amongst staff, students and parents. The Principal and other leaders were highly visible around the school and this helped their 'hands-on' approach. Responsibilities were widely devolved to staff members and middle managers were accountable for ensuring high quality outcomes. Almost all subject teams were very effective.

Relationships and communication between different strands of leadership were effective. The capacity of the school's leaders to improve the school was good. The leaders were effective at devising practical strategies for raising educational outcomes.

The school's self-evaluation processes were good. The school leaders involved the whole staff and devolved evaluation roles effectively to subject departments and sections. This informed the school improvement planning process. The leaders were aware of strengths and areas for development and had identified a set of key priorities. The school had just acquired a fixed budget for staff development and successfully identified professional development needs through effective monitoring and appraisal. The improvement plan contained realistic points for action and had clear success criteria. Most of the recommendations in the previous inspection report had been met. One of the achievements was the significant improvement in teaching and learning. However, at times, self-evaluation documents were not sufficiently evaluative.

The school had good links with parents, which had a positive impact on students' learning. Parents were aware of the overall syllabus requirements and weekly tasks. The school operated an 'open door' policy and there was excellent electronic communication, which kept parents engaged and informed. The school had set up an on-line questionnaire to encourage feedback from parents and most indicated that they were pleased with the reporting process. Links with other schools and the wider community were strong and had positive effects on the educational experience of all students. There was no formal association of parents and teachers.

Governance in the school was acceptable. The school leaders were accountable to the governing body for key aspects relating to financial, organisational and management matters. The governing body consisted of the owners of the school and a recently appointed member with financial expertise. It lacked a wide range of stakeholders, including members with academic or managerial expertise who could play a significant role in supporting the ongoing improvements in the school.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. There were established routines for the effective day-to-day running of the school. Students and staff knew these routines well and the careful timetabling and staggered breaks ensured an orderly and calm environment for learning in the restricted space available. The appointment of a special educational needs coordinator had ensured more appropriate support for students with special educational needs. Teachers were deployed effectively to support students' learning. Facilities had been improved by the provision of additional shade and outside benches. Some staff training had been provided within school, although external opportunities were limited. The school premises and facilities were well maintained, clean and tidy. However, the specialist laboratory facilities for science

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restricted learning because the equipment, fittings and furniture required updating. More books to support Islamic Education and Arabic learning were required in the school library.

[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 judgments. 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	364	36%
	Last year	283	32%
Teachers	66		62%
Students	176		83%

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

Approximately one third of the parents, over half of the teachers and most students responded to the on-line surveys. Parents and teachers indicated strong satisfaction with the leadership of the school and with the changes and improvements that had been made. Almost all indicated that the school kept children safe and that students enjoyed going to school. There was a very high level of satisfaction with the quality of education provided and students' progress in the key subjects. Comments about teaching in Arabic were less positive and indicated that more support was needed to help students' progress. Parents were very satisfied with the school's regular communications and consultation with them. There was a significant level of disappointment expressed by parents and students about the lack of extra-curricular activities and especially physical activities available. Teachers' comments expressed general satisfaction with the improvements made in 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.

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

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