

INSPECTION REPORT

Al Sadiq Islamic English School

Report published in April 2014

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي
Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Sadiq Islamic English School

Location	Al Qusais
Type of school	Private
Website	www.Alsadiqschool.com
Telephone	04-2634083
Address	P O Box 16196, Dubai
Principal	Tajammul A. M.
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-17 / Foundation Stage – Grade 11
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	1964
Largest nationality group of students	Pakistani
Number of Emirati students	46 (2%)
Date of the inspection	25th to 28th November 2013

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The context of the school

Located in Al Qusais, Al Sadiq Islamic English School served a mixed population of students, about half of whom were Pakistanis. Students represented a very wide range of nationalities. The student roll had increased slightly compared to the previous year. The number of Emiratis had declined to 46 students but there was still a substantial number of students, about 20 per cent, from other Arab countries. Over 220 students were in their first year at the school.

The school offered a curriculum leading to IGCSE/GCE examinations with modifications to extend the learning of the Holy Qur'an. Primary students did not take UK attainment tests but internal assessments of a general nature were used.

Over half the school population were in the primary phase, a third were in the secondary phase and just over ten per cent were in the Foundation Stage.

The school employed 126 teachers, the majority of whom had a qualification in education. A shortage of Arabic and Islamic Education teachers meant that many classes were taught in mixed-age groups. The turn-over of staff was a problem for the school. A quarter of the staff had joined the school either at the beginning of the school year or later.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The Islamic ethos of the school which promoted students' good understanding of Islamic values;
- Good attainment in English in the secondary phase and good progress in English in the Kindergarten and secondary phase;
- Good provision for the promotion of healthy living.

Recommendations

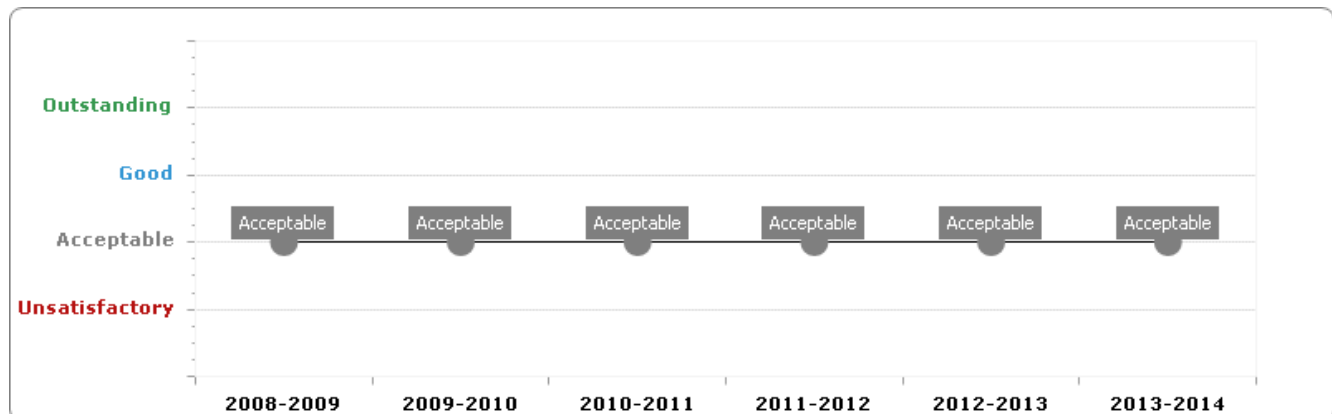
- Ensure that governors hold the school leaders fully to account for the validity and impact of self-evaluation.
- Improve the capacity of all leaders to carry out accurate self-evaluation and effective improvement planning.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring teachers take greater account of assessment data to meet the range of abilities among students, including the most able;
 - developing students' independent and critical thinking skills through enquiry and research;
 - introducing rigorous assessments for students in the Kindergarten, primary and lower secondary phases which can be benchmarked against the standards of the stated curriculum;
 - monitoring teaching rigorously and consistently to provide teachers with clear guidance and targets which are linked closely to the school's priorities;
 - providing professional development which shares the expertise of the very best teaching in the school.
- Broaden and improve the design of the curriculum so that it better meets the individual needs of students and the stated aim of delivering the British curriculum, whilst retaining the strong Islamic influence.

Progress since the last inspection

The school response to the recommendations in the last report had been weak.

- A little progress had been made in the use of attainment data to help improve students' progress and attainment.
- Leaders had begun to monitor teaching systematically but there remained a lack of clarity and confusion about how evaluative judgements are made.
- A recent staff appointment had been made to help to address the needs of students with special educational needs (SEN). Teachers had not yet been provided with professional development to help identify students with SEN.
- The curriculum in lessons had not been modified to meet the needs of students with special educational needs. An after-school support session was not accessible by all students and much of this support relied on repetition of work with insufficient, individual guidance.
- No progress had been made in improving self-evaluation. The school had an over-inflated view of itself largely based on opinion rather than evidence and so had unrealistic and unreliable views of its strengths and weaknesses.

Trend of overall performance



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How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Good
Mathematics			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Quality of students' learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Good	Good	Good
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment was almost all acceptable across the school. It was good in secondary English. In Islamic Education, most students had an adequate understanding of Islamic concepts. Particularly in the girls' section, most students could memorise and recite short Surahs of the Holy Qur'an. In Arabic as a first language, most students' listening and reading skills were in line with expectations for their age. In Arabic as an additional language, reading was in line with curriculum expectations but independent writing and grammar were weak. In English, by Grade 11, most students were able to use their language skills to take part in lively debates. In general, reading skills were at expected levels but writing skills were underdeveloped. In mathematics, Kindergarten children had basic number skills but their understanding of shape and measures was less secure. By Grade 6, students could calculate the highest common factor and least common multiple. In the secondary phase, students had a good understanding of matrices and could use these to explain transformations but their investigative, problem-solving and critical thinking skills were less well developed. In science, students who chose to study science to IGCSE developed good understanding of scientific concepts and achieved good results in examinations.

Students' progress reflected the quality of their attainment almost exactly. Progress in English was good in the Kindergarten from low starting points. In Islamic Education, most students were making acceptable progress in understanding the Seerah. In Arabic as a first language, most students made steady progress in grammar but progress in extended writing was limited. In Arabic as an additional language, most students had improved their listening skills and could understand their teachers' instructions. In English, progress was stronger in students' oral and reading skills than in writing skills. Although students made good progress with their handwriting and spelling, a lack of opportunity for sustained writing was a barrier to further improvement. In mathematics, progress in developing their mathematical thinking and critical thinking skills was limited. In science, children in the Kindergarten were developing skills of enquiry but progress in the development of the skills of scientific investigation was slow in the primary and lower secondary phases.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning skills was acceptable across all phases. They were most effective in the secondary phase where students were more engaged with their learning and more motivated by external examinations. Students in all phases had positive attitudes towards their studies and worked well in groups when given the opportunity. Teachers tended to dominate lessons, so that students, while still positive about their learning, often became passive and disengaged. Pupils in the Kindergarten and lower primary phases were unable to work without direct supervision. Opportunities to link learning to other work, to other

subjects and to real life were planned for but not always followed through in the lesson. Students had only a general awareness of their progress and were often unclear about how to improve in spite of completing regular self-evaluations. Students said that opportunities for them to make use of technology in their lessons were limited. Research and critical thinking skills were underdeveloped, except in English.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good in all phases. In most classes, students were courteous, self-disciplined and well behaved. Students developed an increasing sense of personal responsibility as they progressed through the school. In some classes, particularly in the lower primary and secondary phases, a few boys did not manage their own behaviour well and demonstrated a lack of respect for their fellow students and their teacher. Throughout the school, students' understanding of the influence of Islamic values was strong. They knew how to greet visitors respectfully and could recognise and discuss the importance of Islam in their lives and the influence it had on society in Dubai. Occasionally, a minority of boys did not put their knowledge of Islamic values into practice in their everyday lives in the classroom. Through many displays around the school, projects and celebrations, such as those planned for the UAE National Day, students had a good understanding of their heritage and local culture. Their global awareness was not as well developed. In the Kindergarten, children took care of their classroom and took the initiative to offer support to one another. Older students readily accepted responsibility for the smooth running of the school as prefects and members of the school council. Most students demonstrated a positive work ethic and were keen to do well. Across primary and secondary phases, students demonstrated a good understanding of local environmental and economic issues. Active participation in conservation or sustainable projects was weaker. Punctuality and attendance were good.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable across all phases. It was better in the secondary phase where teachers demonstrated stronger subject knowledge and a greater range of engaging teaching strategies. Across the school, teachers demonstrated commitment and enthusiasm for their subject. However, too many lessons were too strongly dominated by teachers that students were denied opportunities to engage in the work, consolidate their understanding and make greater progress. Too much teaching failed to take account the spread of ability in classes so that lower attaining students were not supported enough and higher attaining students not challenged enough. Teachers knew their students well and relationships between teachers

and students were supportive. Teachers shared the objectives of lessons with students at the start of the lesson but did not maximise opportunities to revisit these at the end of the lesson to check learning. A similar quality of teaching was seen in non-key subject lessons. Weaker teaching was seen in activity lessons which tended simply to keep students occupied rather than give them clear learning goals.

Assessment was unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage and acceptable in the primary and secondary phases. Teachers had a growing awareness of their students' abilities although additional support for special educational needs students and those who were gifted and talented was less evident. In lessons, teachers asked probing questions, especially in English and science, which engaged students and made them think more deeply. Strategies such as self-assessment were being used in most subjects but the quality of these was inconsistent. Teachers checked students' work for accuracy but advice was rare. Assessment did not make use of the National Curriculum levels used in British curriculum schools nor use international benchmarks to compare results. Teachers in the Foundation Stage did not have sufficient knowledge of children's attainment and progress because observations and records of children's learning were insufficient. The school had a wealth of assessment data but did not use this effectively to track progress, support planning or improve teaching and learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable. It was based on the English National Curriculum enhanced by the study of Arabic and Islamic Education. As such, it provided sufficient coverage of subjects. However, in the Foundation Stage, and primary and lower secondary phases, there was not the expected breadth or balance required in such a curriculum. There were insufficient opportunities to engage in independent or creative learning and not enough emphasis on the social, emotional and physical development of students. The school reviewed aspects of the curriculum annually but the review failed to include all subjects notably Arabic and Islamic Education and the outcomes did not fully take account of the views of students. The upper secondary curriculum was sound but the IGCSE programme of study was not fully planned to take advantage of the extra year of study in Grade 11. Transition arrangements within school had improved but advice on opportunities beyond school was underdeveloped. Students welcomed the recent opportunities to lead student clubs and for independent learning, but overall the number and range of extra-curricular enrichment activities, particularly in sport but also in Arabic and Islamic Education, were unsatisfactory.

The design of the curriculum to meet the needs of individual students was unsatisfactory. Across all phases it failed to cater adequately for the educational needs and personal development of different groups of students, particularly those of lower ability or with special needs. The Foundation Stage and primary curricula

lacked breadth both in terms of subjects and how it was provided within subjects. There was a narrow choice after Grade 8 in the secondary curriculum which meant that many students and parents felt aspirations could not be met.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety provision was good in all phases of the school. School transport arrangements were very well managed. The school was well maintained and hygienic with effective procedures and record keeping. Emergency procedures were good although evacuation drills were not held frequently enough. The medical team effectively promoted healthy life-styles, such as a good eating programme which ensured only healthy snacks were on sale at break-time. The team also provided vaccination clinics, monitoring of student body mass index and advice to parents. The science department safely stored materials but did not ensure that eye protection was routinely used during practical procedures involving the mixing or heating of chemicals. Child protection training was good but the reporting procedures lacked clarity.

The quality of support was acceptable across the school. Staff had positive relationships with students. Behaviour in most classes, and in most parts of the school, was well managed. The school had adequate systems to promote good attendance and punctuality. The school admitted students with special educational needs and systems to identify their needs had recently improved with the appointment of an educational psychologist. However, appropriate modifications of the teaching and curriculum in lessons to enable these students to make good progress had not yet taken place. Students and parents had wise and supportive counselling from the social worker for their individual personal needs. The revised structure of the upper secondary phase had been made in response to parental requests and to the needs of students for their future careers.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The structure of leadership was straightforward with clear lines of accountability. Informal and formal meetings of senior staff took place regularly. However, the principal and most leaders were not focused enough on improving the school. Many of the concerns about assessment, self-evaluation and improvement planning went back to the first inspections many years ago. This limited progress indicated a lack of urgency and a limited capacity to improve and innovate. Leaders were not sufficiently aware that a failure to address these and other weaknesses successfully were seriously restricting the school's development.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. Lesson observations took place regularly with an appropriate emphasis on students' learning. However, the school did not know its own strengths and weaknesses and was overly optimistic in its self-evaluation. Improvement planning was weak and lacked detail and clarity about what needed to be achieved by whom, by when and how success would be measured. The school had made little or no progress in its response to most recommendations in the last inspection report.

The school's partnership with parents and the community was acceptable. The school had good links with the parents association and had been commended by KHDA for achieving very high participation rates in the questionnaires for the inspection. The school provided regular reports home to parents and held termly consultation meetings that allowed some aspects of progress to be monitored but reports did not include individual subject teacher comments or advice on what to do next to improve. The school continued to have limited links with the wider community.

Governance was unsatisfactory. Governors had provided extra funds for digital projectors and the development of a parents' portal on the internet to improve communication between school and home, and teachers and students. However, governors had insufficient insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, they had not been consulted on the school self-evaluation or action plans in response to the last inspection report. Governance did not include parents or other stakeholders on a formal basis. The parents association only met representatives of the governing body once or twice a year.

The management of the school, including staffing, facilities and resources, was acceptable. The school operated smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The majority of staff were suitably qualified. The school had ramped and elevator access to most areas of the school. There were insufficient Arabic and Islamic teachers and the resulting mixed-aged classes made unsatisfactory progress. Staff professional development was still not meeting the needs of the school and was depressing standards of progress and attainment. There was too little involvement of external expertise in staff training. Learning resources were sufficient to support acceptable learning.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students represented only two per cent of the school population. In most lessons, Emirati students had similar attainment and made similar progress to their peers. The school tracked Emirati students and recorded their achievement in detail. Emirati students had good relationships with students of other nationalities. Their attendance and punctuality was in line with their cohorts.

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

The school admitted students with special educational needs. The processes to identify their needs had recently improved with the appointment of an educational psychologist. New procedures for consultation with parents had begun to be implemented. Systems and guidance for identification and provision of these students were in the early stages of development. As a result, their progress in lessons was limited. Appropriate modifications of the curriculum or adaptations of teaching strategies in lessons had not been made. Staff had not received appropriate training to help them. The school did provide after-school support for these students, although not all were able to attend because of transport issues. When support groups were small, guidance was effective. When the groups were large and contained mixed grades, support was not sufficiently effective in enabling students to gain a better understanding than in lessons. Although the current quality of support for these students was only acceptable, the new leader had a clear direction for improvement.

How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

The teaching of Arabic as a first language was mostly adequate. Teachers' subject knowledge was secure and better lessons had clear objectives, which were shared with students. In a minority of lessons, especially in the primary phase, teacher talk dominated lessons with few opportunities for students to work independently or in groups. In most lessons, expectations from teachers were too low. The quality of teachers' questioning of students was variable. There were too many closed questions with insufficient challenge. Learning was better when teachers used technological resources, flash cards and textbooks to enliven lessons. However, most teachers did not differentiate activities to meet the needs of the different groups in their classes. In addition, students had insufficient opportunities to practise their speaking and writing. The school used the Ministry of Education curriculum but failed to broaden its scope or adjust the balance between speaking, listening reading and writing. Students that were taught in mixed-age group classes did not make the expected progress because the teaching did not meet their different needs. Transition between the different phases was adequate. The curriculum was not reviewed each year to ensure it met the needs of all students. Cross-curricular links were rarely seen and not well planned.

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	717	64%
	Last year	741	64%
Teachers	119		99%
Students	232		99%

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

Almost all responses from parents, staff and students were very positive and were in line with parents' comments at meetings during the inspection. Most parents and students thought the school ensured a good understanding of Islam. Almost all parents indicated that their child was safe at school and most students agreed they were well looked after. However, only just over half of the students thought their peers were well behaved in school. Most parents stated that their child enjoyed school and almost all reported that school reports and meetings with teachers were regular and helpful. One in five parents indicated that the school did not provide a range of technology to support learning and more than half the students agreed. Only a third of students thought they were making good progress in Arabic as an additional language. Over a quarter of the students reported that school leaders did not listen to their opinions about the school. Teachers were positive about almost all aspects of 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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