

INSPECTION REPORT

Dubai Carmel School

Report published in April, 2014

جهاز الرقابة المدرسية في دبي
Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai Carmel School

Location	Al Nahda
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dubaicarmelschool.com
Telephone	04-2675424
Address	Al Nahda Behind Sahara Centre P.O. BOX 89212 Dubai U.A.E
Principal	Alia Abu Younis
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-17 / KG 1-Grade 11
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	885
Largest nationality group of Students	Arab
Number of Emirati students	178 (20%)
Date of the inspection	13th to 15th January

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The context of the school

Dubai Carmel School is located in Al Nahda. It offers education broadly based on the English National Curriculum for boys and girls aged three to 17 years, from Kindergarten (Foundation Stage) to Year 11. Students took IGCSE examinations in Year 11. At the time of the inspection, there were 885 students on the roll. Most of the students were of Arab background and around 20 percent of school roll were Emirati. The school ran five separate classes in Years 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 for students with pronounced special educational needs. The school also integrated students with less serious special educational needs into mainstream classes, some for the whole timetable and others only for certain classes. In addition to the principal and acting vice-principal, the school had 91 teachers and 39 teaching or support assistants. Twelve teachers had joined the school in the current academic year. Most teachers had a university degree but only a few had a teaching qualification.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Good progress of secondary phase students in Islamic Education and of Foundation Stage children in English.
- Good attainment and progress of primary phase students in Islamic Education and in Arabic as a first language.
- The school's successful, inclusive approach to supporting students with special educational needs and helping them to make progress.
- The understanding shown by children in Foundation Stage of Islamic values and local culture.
- The school's procedures for ensuring the health and safety of children and students.

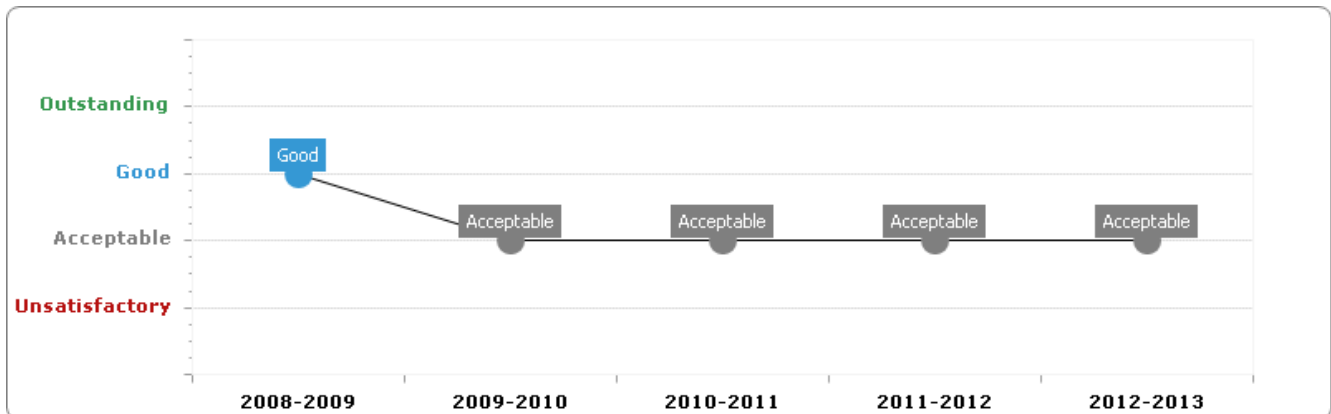
Recommendations

- Ensure that all staff are appropriately involved in drawing up and implementing a detailed and systematic improvement plan in which tasks, timescales and the means of judging success are clearly defined.
- Improve the quality of lessons, particularly in the Foundation Stage, to ensure more opportunities for children to be challenged in their tasks, to apply skills and to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Improve assessment procedures by identifying and feeding back to individual students what they need to do to improve their work, and use assessment results more effectively to match tasks to the needs of different groups of students in each class.
- Broaden the curriculum and introduce more rigour in line with the English National Curriculum and assessment standards.

Progress since the last inspection

- Staff had worked to improve students' attainment and progress in all key subjects. The rate of progress had improved in Islamic Education in the secondary phase and in English in the Foundation Stage.
- Lessons were more challenging and provided opportunities for more active, independent learning for students, although much remained to be done in this respect.
- There had been a focus on improving assessment procedures. Procedures for identifying students' strengths and weaknesses and setting out the next steps in learning for individual students were still rudimentary.
- Staff had made significant progress in providing a personalised curriculum for students in the special education classes. Individual learning plans were helping students to progress.
- Teachers were increasingly benefiting from up-to-date professional development activities.
- Senior leaders had not managed to make improvement plans more systematic and more clearly focused on key priorities.

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	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English			
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
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	Outstanding	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	Good	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	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	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment was acceptable in all key subjects, except for Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language in the primary phase, where it was good. In Islamic Education, most students understood links between what they learned and their daily life practices. In Arabic as a first language, students could read fluently, though comprehension skills and skills in independent writing were less well developed in the older students. Girls' presentation and conversation skills were well developed. In Arabic as an additional language, most students in primary classes were able to respond and give answers to basic questions about familiar topics. They were able to read simple paragraphs but few had well developed comprehension or writing skills. Students' attainment in English in all phases was in line with curriculum expectations for listening, speaking, reading and writing. In mathematics, children in the Foundation Stage attained levels in line with expectations for example in counting. Primary phase students understood fractions and shapes. Those in the secondary phase could use symmetry to reflect shapes, and older ones could plot graphs of algebraic functions. Children in the Foundation Stage had an appropriate knowledge of the world around them. In other phases, students had appropriate knowledge of scientific facts but their understanding of the processes which lay behind them was less well developed.

Progress was generally acceptable, and good in some subjects at certain stages. In Islamic Education, students made good progress in Qur'an recitation and connecting learning to the real world. In Arabic as a first language, students made appropriate progress for their grade, and a majority made better progress in the primary phase. Girls in the upper grades made steady progress in using expression and in some aspects of writing. In Arabic as an additional language, primary phase students were making good progress in listening. Progress in using new vocabulary to form sentences was less strong particularly in the secondary phase. In other phases, progress was slower because students did not think critically or apply their skills well enough. In English, children in the Foundation Stage made good progress in acquiring early language skills. Students in other phases would have made more progress in English and in mathematics had they been challenged more effectively to think critically and apply their skills. In science, students made appropriate progress in acquiring knowledge but their progress in skills of investigation was slower.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning skills was acceptable in all phases. Most children and students were able to motivate themselves and engage with their tasks. Children in Foundation Stage did not always have enough opportunity to apply the skills they had learned in one context to another, for example using speaking and listening skills when playing. When given opportunities, students could collaborate in groups. Students developed their independent learning skills when teachers challenged them to think critically and to undertake investigations. Similarly, when given opportunities, most students could make meaningful connections between what they were learning and real-life situations.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal responsibility was good in all phases. Most students showed positive attitudes towards others and their learning. They took responsibility in the school council and for adopting a healthy lifestyle, for example choosing a healthy diet and participating in physical activities. Attendance was good. Students were usually punctual to lessons.

Children in the Foundation Stage had an outstanding knowledge of the values of Islam and UAE cultures. They were proud of the fact that Dubai had won the bid to host Expo 2020. Across the primary and secondary phases, students had good knowledge of UAE heritage and culture. They helped to create a strong Islamic ethos in the school by implementing the values of Islam in their lives. Knowledge and understanding of other cultures were not as well developed.

Community and environmental responsibility across the school was good. Students understood the needs of their school community and took part in activities to support the school and local community, for example, they participated in recycling campaigns. Older students supported staff in maintaining good student behaviour around the school. There were insufficient opportunities for students to initiate activities and to influence school development. Students had a good work ethic and enjoyed opportunities to show initiative when given the chance to do so. Older students in particular had a good understanding of local and global environmental issues.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

The quality of teaching was acceptable in the Foundation Stage and in the secondary school. It was good in the primary phase. Teachers had good knowledge of the subjects they taught. In the Foundation Stage, teachers did not provide learning activities to allow children to explore independently. In the other phases, a common teaching approach was for teachers to explain a topic, after which students would complete textbook exercises. Nevertheless, teachers were increasingly providing students with opportunities for more active learning, particularly in the primary phase. In the best lessons, teachers used open questions to encourage students think for themselves. Lessons were planned well in general but detailed aspects were often not fully thought out to make the best use of the time available.

Assessment was acceptable in all phases. Staff collated students' internal test results and teachers' grades or marks for each student. Tests were not benchmarked against UK or international standards. This meant that the data gathered was not used fully effectively for guiding the curriculum and teaching although, in some cases, teachers used assessment information to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the needs of groups of students. The marking of written work gave students and parents an assurance that teachers had seen a student's work. However the feedback did not consistently include detailed information about what was done well or what needed to be improved

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum and its design to meet the needs of all students were acceptable in all phases. However, the curriculum did not have the full breadth or rigour of what was expected in the English National Curriculum. Islamic Education and Arabic were positive features of the Foundation Stage provision. In the Foundation Stage and the primary phase, the curriculum was too formal, with too much teacher talk and insufficient opportunities for independent learning. Opportunities for creative learning were restricted. The annual curriculum review had not been rigorous enough to ensure that the planned progression for students was appropriate. There were sound arrangements in place to support students' transition between phases but students felt less well supported in making decisions about their futures after IGCSE. Cross-curricular links, critical thinking and problem solving were part of some lessons but not consistently so. In Arabic, students welcomed opportunities for independent learning. The range of extra-curricular activities was inadequate. The curriculum catered well for the educational needs and personal development of lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs. Those who needed help to learn in the English

speaking curriculum were also well supported. Choice of subjects after Grade 8 was narrow. Many students felt that their aspirations could not be met. The curriculum was not adapted well to meet the needs of the most able students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The policies, staffing, and systems for student health and safety were good. The school was a safe and healthy environment for students. The school had well trained and diligent staff who looked after maintenance, cleaning, medical aspects, and the canteen. They worked with the teachers to create a healthy and safe environment for all. Students were well supervised, including travel on school buses. Fire safety drills were carried out regularly. A child protection policy was in place.

The quality of support was good across the school. Staff had good relationships with all students. Behaviour management strategies were understood by most of the students and staff implemented the strategies appropriately. Students' attendance and punctuality were monitored each morning and decisive action was taken if levels fell. Parents were contacted immediately when students failed to arrive when expected. This practice supported the importance of maintaining good levels of attendance. Most students arrived promptly to classes, ready to work. Students were supported in making choices between science and commerce subjects, with travel and tourism being added as a new subject. Teachers provided information to students about their progress and general guidance was provided to them when necessary. Effective advice on academic progress and possible future careers was provided to students by the school counsellor.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was acceptable. The principal had a clear vision for the development of the school. She gave a good lead in relation to the school's ethos of inclusion and meeting the needs of students with special educational needs. She was aided by an acting vice-principal. Although leaders were hardworking, the effectiveness of their efforts to improve outcomes for students was variable. The approach to planning and implementing of change was not sufficiently systematic.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Staff used a good range of approaches, including lesson observations, surveys of staff, parent and student views, and collection of data on student attainment. However, the information gathered through these approaches was not always analysed or used well enough to inform improvement plans. Senior staff had placed an appropriate emphasis on

recommendations from the previous report but, while they had made some progress, more remained to be done.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents felt welcomed and were appreciative of communications from staff. They had good opportunities to be involved in the school's work. They received regular reports on their children's attainment in tests but these reports did not set out students' next steps in learning. There were productive links with other schools and with the local community.

Governance was acceptable. The governing board had a good range of representatives, including members of the business and education communities, parents and teachers. Members were informed about the school through board meetings and by meeting stakeholders. They helped to organise staff visits to other schools. However, the board did not hold the school sufficiently to account for its provision and outcomes for students.

Management was acceptable. The school's daily operations were managed effectively. The school's stock of library books, tablet computers and other information technology had been increased. There was still scope for further improvement in resources. Staffing levels were appropriate. Most teachers held university degrees, but few had a teaching qualification.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Around one-quarter of the Emirati students in the school were in classes for students with special educational needs. This proportion was a feature of the confidence which Emirati parents had in the school's provision for such students. Like their peers from other backgrounds, those students were making good progress against their individual targets. The numbers of Emirati students in each grade in the mainstream classes was low. However, there was some evidence that Emirati students performed less well than their peers in English, mathematics and science in roughly half of all grades, particularly those in the primary phase. Attendance of Emirati students was lower than the average for other students in the primary phase. The curriculum made good provision for celebrating the Emirati heritage. Emirati parents had opportunities to be involved in the life of the school, and there were Emiratis on the governing board.

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

Students with special educational needs (SEN) made good progress towards meeting their personal targets. There were detailed procedures for identifying students with special educational needs,

including those who were gifted and talented. The identification process started at an early age, or as soon as possible after students had joined the school. The school made good use of a psychologist and other specialist staff to help when external assessment was recommended. Parents were involved at all stages through the referral system, and meetings were arranged regularly between teachers and parents to discuss their children's progress. All members of the SEN team were appropriately qualified. They were led by a well-qualified co-ordinator. With on-going professional development for all SEN staff, new shadow teachers were continually supported and mentored by experienced SEN staff. The senior managers monitored teaching by visiting SEN classes daily to help improve the quality of provision. The strong teamwork throughout the school and the determination to make improvements made a very positive impact on the quality of the SEN provision throughout the school. Shadow teachers and SEN staff supported students well in the classroom setting. Teachers had additional detailed information about each student. Individual educational plans (IEPs) were of a good quality and were well adapted to the needs of students. The school had successfully adapted textbooks in all subjects to include more pictures and simple text for students with SEN. This helped students feel more included and accelerated their progress. The school's tracking of progress and academic testing indicated that students were making steady progress from their starting points. Progress was monitored monthly, including targets which were used as a focus for tracking progress over time and informing reviews.

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

Almost all teachers of Arabic as a first language had good subject knowledge. They set out clear learning objectives for their students. They had reasonable expectations of what students might achieve. Most teachers encouraged collaborative learning among students but only a few were totally successful in this aim. Communication from teachers helped students to improve their listening, reading and speaking skills. Teachers rarely encouraged critical thinking or investigative learning. Teachers regularly used IT, for example to show short video clips or slides. Use of IT by students was increasing. Standards of work were generally in line with MoE expectations but staff had not updated the textbooks they were using. The curriculum was modified to meet the needs of students with SEN but it was not reviewed sufficiently well. There were insufficient opportunities in the curriculum to develop independent creative writing skills.

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	139	26%
	Last year	79	16%
Teachers	77		85%
Students	35		56%

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

The number of parents who completed the questionnaire was too low to allow reliable reporting of their views. Most teachers completed the questionnaire, expressing positive views about the school. Almost all thought that they participated in self-evaluation and improvement activities, including curriculum review. They felt that inspection had led to improvements and that they were supported through professional development activities. They agreed that they were encouraged to ensure that students with SEN were fully integrated into the life of the school. Almost all thought that the school was led well and that leaders listened to teachers' views. Most students who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied with the education they received. A majority had positive views about the curriculum and the qualifications and skills of teachers. Just over half were happy with the range of extra-curricular activities offered.

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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