

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Star International School - Al Twar

Report published in April 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Star International School - Al Twar

Location	Al Twar
Type of school	Private
Website	www.starschoolaltwar.com
Telephone	04-2638999
Address	PO Box 51008, Al Twar 2, Dubai
Principal	Durriya Goriawala
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-14 / Kindergarten 1 to Grade 9
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	376
Largest nationality group of Students	Arab
Number of Emirati students	53 (14%)
Date of the inspection	12th to 14th November 2012

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## The context of the school

Star International School is situated in Al Twar. At the time of the inspection there were 376 students on roll, a reduction of 30 students from the previous year. Eighty two students were new to the school this year.

Following the National Curriculum for England, it provided an education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to Year 9, aged three to 14 years.

There were 38 full-time teachers, including the Principal and senior leaders. They were supported by 16 teaching assistants from Foundation Stage to Year 2. There were 20 classes. Approximately 14 per cent of the students were Emiratis. Over fifty nationalities were represented among the student population, with other Arab nationalities, and Indians being the highest proportions.

At the time of inspection the Principal was in her fifth year at the school and eight teachers were newly appointed.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

## Key strengths

- The students' improved attainment and progress in secondary mathematics;
- The improved teaching, learning and assessment particularly in the secondary phase of the school;
- Improved planning of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage;
- The outstanding provision for health and safety across all phases;
- Leaders who were committed to improving the school.

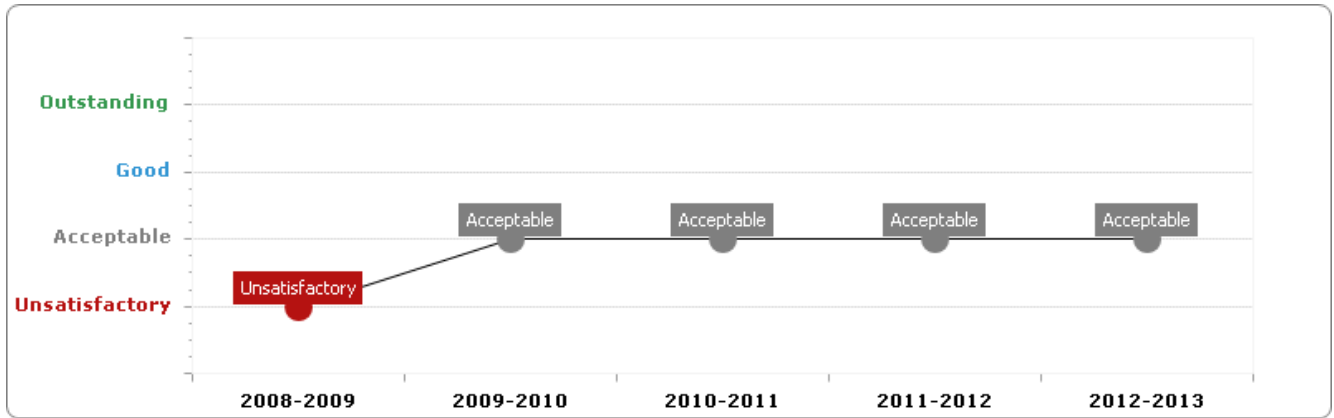
## Recommendations

- Further improve students' attainment and progress in the Foundation Stage and primary phase by improving the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning;
- Improve opportunities for students to become independent and critical thinkers;
- Continue to improve the accuracy of school self-evaluation including the monitoring of teaching and learning;
- Develop an effective governance structure that includes wider community representation.

## Progress since the last inspection

- There was improved progress by students in a number of key subjects in the primary and secondary;
- There was greater consistency of teaching and learning in the secondary phase;
- There was more effective and better informed use of assessment data across all phases;
- There was further development of the Foundation Stage curriculum incorporating the newly updated Early Years Foundation Framework.

## Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

In Foundation Stage, in English, children had a wide range of vocabulary and could recognise initial letter sounds. In mathematics, the majority of children in Foundation Stage 2 could identify numerals and a few simple shapes. Thematic approaches, such as growing seeds and transport in science, enabled children to plan for and construct simple experiments. In both Arabic as a first and additional language, most primary students had good listening skills, an enriched vocabulary and could understand instructions. In English most could discuss written texts, summarise content, use synonyms in speech and were developing confidence in using difficult words to explain ideas. In mathematics, students' knowledge of number was age-appropriate. In science, almost all Year 1 students could plan and write about simple investigations. By Year 4, almost all students were able to describe, using scientific vocabulary, the conditions that reduced or increased friction. In Islamic Education, most secondary students had an acceptable understanding of the impact of Islam in their daily lives. Good reading comprehension skills were displayed by the majority of students in Arabic but their understanding of poetry was limited. In English most students were able to: act out short scenarios, read with expression and write short play scripts, converting prose into drama. In mathematics, students' skills in problem solving and data handling were relative weaknesses. In science, by Year 7, most students had developed a good knowledge and understanding of energy.

In Foundation Stage, children's progress was strongest in English. By the end of Foundation Stage children's conversational vocabulary, handwriting and reading had developed to a good level, while in mathematics the majority could recognise, count and write numbers above 20. A majority of Foundation Stage children could communicate simple planning for investigations in science and observe accurately. In Islamic Education the majority of older primary students had developed acceptable recitation skills but most had limited knowledge of the Prophet's biography. In both Arabic as a first and additional language, listening skills, understanding and responding had developed well. In English, most students had increased their vocabulary and their understanding of grammar, including similes, metaphors and personification. Their writing demonstrated a good use of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. In mathematics a minority of Key Stage One students followed computational procedures when directed; however, many still had difficulty choosing the correct operations to solve mathematical problems. In science, most students were able to apply scientific understanding in investigative planning, and identify independent and dependent variables. The majority of secondary students were making good progress in key subjects.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

The 53 Emirati students across all phases were generally making good progress in all subjects. Girls were making better progress than boys. Attainment levels were good in Islamic Education, Arabic and English, and acceptable in mathematics and science. Progress was good in Islamic Education, Arabic, English, and science. Almost all Emirati had outstanding attendance and punctuality records. Behaviour, in class and around the school, was at least good. Students were respectful and courteous to their peers and teachers. They co-operated fully in class and were able to work independently in a manner similar to other students in the school. Their attainment was beginning to be tracked more accurately as the school moved towards a more individualised approach to learning. The school was proactive in encouraging full participation and involvement from parents and, as a result, parental support was high.

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

Student's attitudes and behaviour were good throughout the school. In the majority of lessons behaviour was exceptional and students displayed high levels of motivation, concentration and involvement. Relationships between adults and students had a positive impact on learning. Students were confident to answer questions knowing errors would be corrected sensitively. Students treated each other with respect. School house teams developed a strong sense of team work among students and the Students' Council was active. Older students did not always make healthy food choices. Attendance was outstanding and lateness for school was rare. Students' understanding of Islamic values and their awareness of cultures were good. Most students displayed an appreciation for the multi-cultural nature of their school. They gained understanding from their classmates and special events. They developed a particular awareness of local culture, traditions and the role of Islam in Dubai. A minority of students took roles of responsibility as student council members or house captains. These students developed skills in designing, organising and managing events in the school. A number of activities were organised to provide service to the local community.

Students' sense of community and environmental awareness was also good. The school councils were active and had initiated a range of activities. Their opinions were valued and the influence of the councils' work was increasing. A few individuals had volunteered to help those in need in the community. Students across all phases gained awareness of environmental issues such as energy conservation, the production of fertile soil or local weather through projects in a range of subjects. Some had a good understanding of energy.

They could give practical ideas about how their knowledge might influence their personal behaviour. While most students were supportive of projects to help those in need, their involvement was at times limited to contributions to fund-raising for charitable causes. Most students had a strong work ethic and could lead others confidently. The ability to make informed economic decisions was developing

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of teaching was acceptable in Foundation Stage and primary years and good in secondary. The respectful rapport between teachers and students ensured a positive learning environment. Across a broad range of subjects most teachers achieved the learning objectives planned for their students. Tasks were well matched to the needs of different groups of students. However, in Arabic and mathematics, teachers did not challenge all students sufficiently. Students with special educational needs were not always provided with appropriate learning aids to support their development. Most teachers however, used resources well, including information and communication technology (ICT) to promote engaging learning. In the most effective lessons, particularly in science and English, teachers encouraged higher order thinking and students had opportunities to investigate independently. Elsewhere, over-direction by teachers restricted opportunities for students to engage in purposeful discussion and enquiry. This reduced students' choices and independent learning opportunities. Teaching in a range of other subjects including physical education, information and communications technology and French was mostly good.

Learning in Foundation Stage and primary was acceptable, while in secondary it was good. Students understood what was required of them; they followed their teachers' instructions diligently and worked co-operatively. Independent enquiry skills were evident in science but were not a regular feature of learning across other subjects. Most students across the school had good subject knowledge but often had difficulty applying their learning to real-life situations. This restricted their ability to solve problems and achieve higher levels of attainment. Most students took responsibility for their learning, knew how to improve their work and were active when given the opportunity to do so. This was a more frequent aspect of learning in secondary classes. Children in the Foundation Stage were enthusiastic learners but did not consistently play in a manner that led them to explore their own thinking, analyse outcomes independently of the teacher, as well as develop imaginative aspects as a result of their natural curiosity.

Assessment was good overall. In Foundation Stage teachers consistently used the early learning goals to record progress. Across the school student attainment and progress data was gathered regularly. Most primary and secondary teachers used available data to design learning objectives that met students' needs. Most teachers gave oral feedback to students. However, marking was inconsistent across different year levels and did not always provide students with clear advice on how to improve. The school tracked the attainment and progress of each student and used the data, together with the results of external tests to provide support for students who were not making expected progress. Assessment data was analysed and led to strategic decisions about teaching practice and curriculum review. When given the opportunity, students were accurate in assessing their own learning and that of others.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was good across all phases. The Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum for England had been effectively modified, providing a good platform for the development of a broad range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Transition arrangements were appropriate with much work done to ensure a seamless transition between Foundation Stage and Year 1. The revised Foundation Stage curriculum provided a wide range of learning opportunities across all learning areas. Based on a thematic approach it was beginning to enable students of different abilities to make effective progress. The primary and secondary curricula catered well for the needs of average ability students but did not always provide enough challenge for those with higher ability. This was especially so in Arabic and mathematics. There was a good range of enrichment activities within the school day and visits outside of school also broadened students' learning opportunities, experience and social awareness.

[View judgements](#)

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

Systems and procedures for ensuring students' health and well-being were outstanding. The school environment was very well maintained with resources stored in an organised and accessible manner. The corridors and classrooms were bright and hosted an array of attractive displays to support students in their work. Adult supervision was vigilant. Transport services were well organised with seat belts and attendance checked to ensure student safety. Regular fire drills had resulted in speedy, yet orderly, evacuations. Medical staff showed high levels of care, keeping accurate, detailed records. Medicines were securely stored and laboratory chemicals secure. All members of staff had undergone first aid training.

The school was proactive in promoting healthy lifestyles, although greater focus was required in developing this awareness for the students in the senior part of the school. Child protection procedures were well embedded and the school recently introduced students to a, 'Stranger Danger' programme, to support their awareness even further.

The quality of support for students was good. Staff-student relationships were mature and respectful. Behaviour management strategies were strong and consistently applied across the school. All staff showed high levels of care and concern for students. An efficient system of communication between home and school was in place, in respect of attendance, punctuality and illness. Students were effectively informed about their next stages of learning. Some had opportunities to enjoy work experience.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students with special educational needs made good progress in English and acceptable progress in mathematics, science, Islamic Education and Arabic. The use of individual education plans alongside support in lessons ensured that these students made similar progress to their peers. In English, the good emphasis on speaking and listening skills supported their understanding well. Early identification and assessment took place and clear guidance was available to those who worked with these students. The school used published categories to identify students' differing learning needs. Teachers were developing an increased understanding of individual needs and sought support when a student did not make expected progress. Parents were directly involved in the assessment process. They met with school staff to devise individual plans. These were used at home and school and ensured a consistent approach. Parents were informed of their child's progress on a termly basis. Some teachers were less well versed than others in identifying those who needed support. The use of individual education plans to provide focused learning objectives for students, was inconsistent across the school. The school monitored the progress of students through its whole school assessment process.

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

The quality of leadership was good. The senior leadership team was energetic and mutually supportive. Senior leaders had a good knowledge of all aspects of the school's work. Together they skillfully shared a vision with students and parents and continued to forge ahead with numerous improvements. They had embedded numerous systems and structures that were beginning to result in more robust teaching and

learning practices. Middle management had been strengthened through appropriate recruitment and greater clarification of roles. Managers supported the senior leaders in strategic planning.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Procedures for self-evaluation enabled a comprehensive and generally accurate overview. The school's final self-evaluation document was mostly robust, although some aspects, particularly leadership practices, required more solid analysis and evaluation. The school's improvement plan was based on the findings of the previous inspection report. It was populated with ambitious, yet workable, goals. At the time of the inspection, a good number of the recommendations had been adequately addressed. There was a comprehensive and generally accurate annual performance management programme for staff; however more focus on effective student learning outcomes during classroom observations was required.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. The school regularly sought the views of parents and kept them informed using newsletters, weekly bulletins, student progress reports and e-mail messaging. It promptly informed parents of the few behaviour issues. The Parents' Association was active in supporting school events and fundraising for charities. Regular and comprehensive school reports were supported by parent's consultation meetings. The reports provided information on children's progress, as well as improvement strategies. The school was developing a higher profile in the local and wider community with increased links with local businesses.

Governance was acceptable. The parent and community representative on the previous year's board had resigned and had not been replaced. Meetings were occasional, with a focus on property improvements and required resources. Monitoring of the work of the school, including student attainment data, accountability for progress with learning, was not a regular feature of the work of the governing body.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources was good. The day to day management of the school was particularly effective, efficient and robust. The staff and students were well informed about school events. The eight teachers new to the school were supported adequately, while most of the professional development needs of the returning staff were met through well-judged training. Staff members were well qualified academically and had appropriate teaching qualifications. Students were beginning to use information communication technology equipment to support and enrich their classroom learning.

[View judgements](#)

## What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	112	34%
	Last year	92	29%
Teachers	29		78%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

A minority of parents responded to this year's survey, a slightly higher percentage than last year. Most teachers completed the survey. There were many aspects of school life that carried parental support, including the high level of consultation about their children's education and progress. A minority of parents thought progress in Islamic Education, Arabic as a first language and involvement in the school's decision making were less than good. Teachers were positive about most aspects of the school, but a majority felt that they were not sufficiently involved in decision-making.



## 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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae)

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