

INSPECTION REPORT

Ambassador School L.L.C

Report published in February 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Ambassador School L.L.C

Location	Al Mankhool
Type of school	Private
Website	www.ambassadorschool.com
Telephone	043983535
Address	41a Street, Mankhool
Principal	Winston Gomez
Curriculum	Indian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	5-15 / Grade 1-Grade 9
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	661
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	23rd to 25th September

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The context of the school

Ambassador School is a new private school, situated in Mankhool. It opened in April 2013 and was formally known as the Global International School. It is now operating independently. There was a significant turnover of students and teachers following this change. The school provided education for 661 students from Grade 1 to Grade 9. The majority of the students were in Grades 1 and 2 and nearly all the students were of Indian descent. Many students joined the school from the separate Ambassador Kindergarten School. There was a small number of students with special educational needs (SEN) in the school who received some support from the school's SEN Learning Centre. 0

The school followed an Indian curriculum, which is taught in English, leading to the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE). At the time of the inspection, there were 60 teachers. All had a first degree and nearly all held appropriate educational qualifications. Forty two per cent of teachers had been at the school for one year or less. Part of this change represented additional staff in anticipation of an increased student roll. A small number of teaching assistants supported students on the SEN register.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Good attainment and progress in English, maths and science in the middle and secondary phases;
- The positive attitude of students to all aspects of school life;
- Outstanding arrangements to ensure health, safety and security in all parts of the school;
- Good leadership at all levels;
- Strong partnership with parents that has a positive impact on learning in the home;
- Enthusiastic teaching staff committed to raising student attainment.

Recommendations

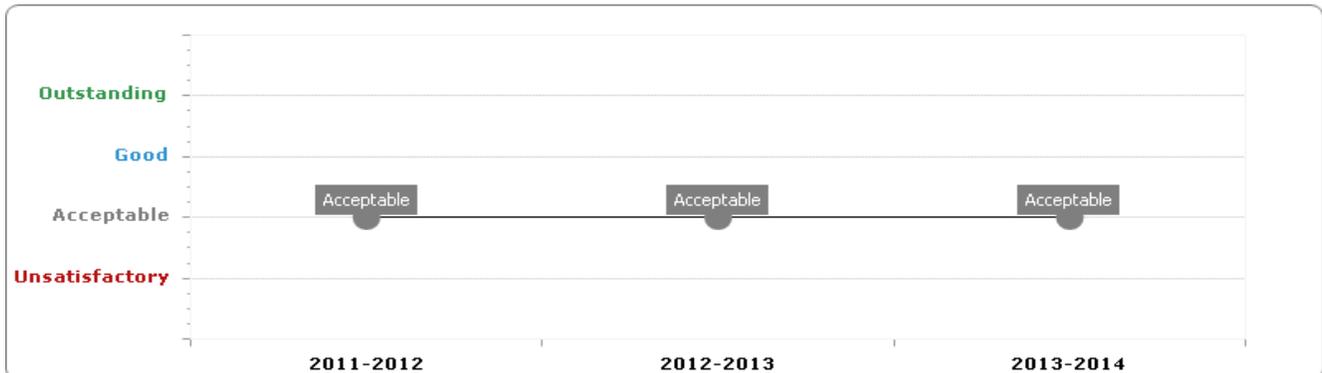
- Raise the expectation that teachers of Islamic Education and Arabic have for students' attainment and progress;
- Improve the lower primary teachers' behaviour management skills;
- Improve the quality of day-to-day assessment so that planning can be modified to meet the learning needs of all groups of students;
- Develop teachers' skills to identify students with learning difficulties effectively and to modify the teaching to meet their needs;
- Prioritise and focus improvement targets within the school improvement plan, on the key aspects for each phase of the school.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made some progress in addressing the recommendations made in previous inspection reports, in particular;

- Students' recitation and memorisation skills in Islamic Education had improved as a result of increased teaching resources ;
- The promotion of critical thinking, making real-life connections and increasing the opportunities for independent learning were features of some classes and grades, particularly in the middle and secondary phases of the school;
- In some of the classes some gifted and talented students had been identified and they were using self-assessment;
- New staff, with appropriate skills and experiences, had been appointed to lead on the work with students with special educational needs
- Transition arrangements to the school and from grade to grade had been reviewed and modified to meet the needs of all students;

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Quality of students' learning skills	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Assessment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Not Applicable	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Good
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, progress and learning skills?

Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language was acceptable in the primary and middle school phases of the school. Most students understood the key principles of faith and worship in Islam. Memorisation and recitation skills had improved. Most students recognised the Arabic letter sounds correctly and understood familiar expressions. In the upper grades, students' speaking skills were limited. Attainment in English and science was acceptable in the primary phase and good in middle and secondary phases. Extended writing in the primary phase, although improving, remained under-developed. Students in the primary phase had good scientific knowledge but important scientific skills were less developed. Attainment in mathematics was good across all phases. The majority of students demonstrated an ability to use number logically and accurately and students were able to apply this to a range of problem solving situations.

Progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language was acceptable across all phases. Most students were beginning to develop their understanding of how their Islamic Studies were relevant to daily life. In Arabic as an additional language, low teacher expectations hampered progress, particularly in speaking. Progress in English and science was in line with attainment. It was acceptable in the primary phase and good in the middle and secondary phases. Most students, as they moved to and through the middle and secondary phases, were writing with increasing sophistication and using extensive vocabulary. Similarly, students accelerated their progress in science when they were enabled to engage in and take responsibility for their own learning. A change to a thematic approach to the teaching and learning of mathematics saw the majority of students make gains in their knowledge of number.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of students' learning was acceptable in Primary and good in the Middle and Secondary. The majority of students were enthusiastic, demonstrated good levels of prior knowledge and collaborated in the learning process. Some students in the middle and secondary phases of the school had developed their understanding of their strengths and were starting to set themselves targets for future learning. A small minority of students in the early primary phase were less attentive to their learning because teachers were unable to manage the behavior of these students adequately within the classroom. Where there was good learning, students had been encouraged by teachers to think independently and make real-life connections. Enquiry and research skills were emerging as features of good practice, especially in the extended learning tasks undertaken at home. Opportunities for students to apply their learning to new contexts were inhibited

by a lack of technology in the classroom. The introduction of a new system for the older students, provided peer support and further challenge.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Attitudes and behaviour were good across the school. Students responded positively to their teachers' guidance. The school was free of bullying and behaviour around the school was calm and orderly. Relationships between staff and students were supportive and courteous and contributed well to the students' positive attitudes to school. Consequently, attendance was good. Students were very aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles and made sensible food choices with school meals and in their lunch packs.

Students demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic values and could discuss how they affected life in Dubai. They showed good understanding of the local traditions and heritage of UAE. Students appreciated UAE traditions and their own culture but their knowledge of other cultures was rudimentary. However, most students had a good awareness of the multi-cultural society in Dubai and they appreciated the value of that diversity.

Community and environmental responsibility was good. The students understood their roles and responsibilities well. The school listened to and acted upon suggestions from the Student Council. Students participated in a range of community events and took part in activities to improve the environment in and around the school, for example creating art pieces out of waste. The school was a member of Emirates Environmental Group that initiated and supported all environment related activities.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

The quality of teaching for effective learning was acceptable in Primary and good in the Middle and Secondary. Teachers of middle and secondary phase students were knowledgeable about curriculum content and the strategies for teaching it. Teaching in the early primary phase was less secure, due at times, to poor classroom management and a lack of understanding of how younger students learn. Planning was more comprehensive in the middle and secondary classes and addressed the higher as well as the lower attaining students. The skilful use of well-chosen questions to engage and challenge learners was a feature in many of these classes. Progress was strongest in those classes where students were active learners, where responsibility was given for learning and where support was given to evaluate success and target improvement. Where good teaching was evident, teachers communicated to their students what was expected of them, and why. However, the teaching of Arabic in most classes was not sufficiently challenging and consequently students made less progress. Teachers used resources, when available, to enrich and clarify the content of the lesson although the range of resources was limited.

The quality of assessment was acceptable across all phases. The school had carried out a number of assessments and gathered a range of information on progress at each level. Teachers were using assessment strategies that included classroom tests, questioning and extended activities and through this had built up a good knowledge of students' strengths and areas for development during the year. However, the individual tracking of student progress, from year to year, was underdeveloped. Comparisons and trends in attainment between phases were as yet unknown to the school. There was also uncertainty as to how to interpret the attainment data to inform teaching strategies and learning outcomes. The consistent use of objective and appropriate student performance benchmarks had not been developed. Students were given oral feedback. The use of detailed student assessment principles, which were used to set further learning goals, were evident in some lessons. Good practice was noted in the marking of some student work, especially in mathematics, but it was not consistent across the other key subjects.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum, across all phases, was acceptable. From Grades 1 through to 9, the school followed the Indian ICSE Board curriculum. Effective transition arrangements were in place to provide support to the students on entry and between phases. Meetings were arranged for parents and new students were given early opportunities to meet with their new teachers and visit the school. The departments in all three phases had reviewed the curriculum to ensure smooth progression. In the core subjects of mathematics and

science, opportunities for independent learning, investigation and enquiry were limited but developing. There were instances in English and mathematics where a cross-curricular approach was used to help students understand concepts, but this approach was not used consistently across all subject areas and phases. The school offered a wide range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. However, the use of community links to enhance learning was still developing.

The school had made some adjustments to the curriculum to provide tasks that were closely matched to students' different abilities, including those with special educational needs. This was at an early stage of development and not fully effective across the whole school. The range of curriculum subjects provided suitable opportunities for students to follow their aspirations. Extra-curricular clubs, especially in sporting activities, increased the choice in the curriculum for students and permitted further opportunities for students to pursue their interests and develop specific talents.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The arrangements and procedures for health and safety were outstanding. School transport was efficient and safe and procedures were closely monitored. The building was maintained to a high standard and was a safe and welcoming environment. Detailed and regular records were kept on fire safety procedures and unforeseen safety incidents. New fire extinguishers had been provided and distributed appropriately. Healthy living was promoted and students made informed choices in the clean canteen. The school medical staff advised on nutrition and was proactive in monitoring students' health. Medicines and relevant medical information were securely stored. A comprehensive range of child protection policies was in place and known by staff. All new staff received health and safety induction and school leaders ensured that students' needs and concerns were addressed promptly and sensitively.

The quality of support was acceptable in all phases. Good relationships between staff and students were a feature of the school and based on mutual respect. The school had a caring and orderly ethos and all individuals were valued. Behaviour around the school was well managed but the behaviour of some boys in the lower primary classes was not managed in the same efficient manner. There were effective systems to promote good attendance and improve punctuality. Identification of learning difficulties and referral to the Learning Centre by teachers was inconsistent across the classes. Many teachers have insufficient strategies and knowledge to be able to continue the adapted learning programmes for students with SEN that had been created by the staff in the Learning Centre.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good. There was a clear and shared vision, which was reflected in the strong values held by the school community. Some key members were new to their posts but, in a short period of time, they had had some success in improving aspects of learning. Leadership was effectively delegated and roles and responsibilities were understood clearly. Professional relationships between the leadership team members were based on respect, collaboration and challenge. Opportunities to share information were frequent. Given stability of staffing, there was good capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Information was collected from a wide range of sources and was used to create the school improvement plan. However there were too many initiatives and insufficient focus on the different needs of each phase of the school. Systems to monitor the progress of the plans and to make accurate self-evaluation judgements were still under-developed. A broad range of training supported school initiatives and senior leaders monitored the quality of teaching and learning. All the recommendations from the last report had been addressed and some progress had been made.

Partnerships with parents and community were good. Most parents felt that they were welcome in the school and that the school would listen to and act on concerns in a timely manner. Parents had many opportunities to become involved in the life of the school. They felt that they had good information about their children's progress through the termly record cards, which were shared through the Digital Campus. There had been two questionnaires completed by parents this year and, as a result, the school had made changes to aspects of the curriculum.

Governance was acceptable. The Governing Board was created in April 2013 and included limited representation from stakeholders. Although there was some accountability, through a report from the Principal to the Governing Board, there was limited objectivity in its evaluation. The report included data on student attainment but the level of detail was insufficient for the school to be held accountable. The Governing Board ensured that all statutory requirements were met and worked to meet the stated needs of the school. Plans were being made to extend the representation on the Governing Board and to establish a sub-committee structure.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The day-to-day life of the school ran very smoothly. Almost all members of staff were well qualified and appointment procedures were thorough and timely. Induction procedures had been developed further. School premises were clean and there were sufficient classrooms although the classroom spaces in Grade 1 and 2 were too small for the number of students. Specialist areas, especially those for art and music, were not sufficiently resourced.

Learning resources were adequate but limited in the early primary classes. Attendance was good and punctuality had been improved through more effective management of the bus transport system and improved communication with the home.

[View judgements](#)

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

The identification of students with special educational needs was acceptable. Students' progress was showing early signs of improving and the majority of students met curriculum expectations. Provision for students in the Learning Centre was good but classroom-based provision was variable and often unsatisfactory. The Learning Centre provided a calm and constructive learning environment in which staff set relevant targets, adapted work appropriately for students and provided well-judged support. Improvements were being made to the training of teachers to give them the skills to modify the curriculum and so ensure students were provided with support or challenge to match their needs but this was at an early stage. The monitoring of progress was being improved under the direction of the new head of special educational needs. The close partnership with parents was sustained. A thorough review of the provision for special educational needs had been carried out by the new head of department and important revisions to procedures were in the process of being implemented but were not yet effective. Training for teaching staff had been initiated and was beginning to show early signs of success. Lesson plans were beginning to be adapted to take account of the learning needs of students, especially those who find learning more challenging. Teachers were still acquiring these skills and support in classrooms was still developing.

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	213	37%
	Last year	561	71%
Teachers	54		89%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

The following statements were based on the survey response at the time of the inspection. The above response figures are the most up-to-date and accurate available prior to publication of this report.

Only a minority of parents responded to the survey. Most teachers responded. Of those that responded all teachers and most parents were pleased with the performance of the school. Most parents agreed that their children had a wide range of activities at school from which to choose, that school transport was safe, and that progress in Arabic, English, mathematics and science was good. The majority of parents felt that their children's progress in Islamic Education was good. Most agreed that their children enjoyed school, that work was interesting and challenging and their children knew how to improve their learning. There were no responses from parents regarding the provision, monitoring and progress of children with special educational needs. The majority of teachers were positive about their conditions of service. As there were no students in Grade 10 and no student survey was carried out.

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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