

INSPECTION REPORT

Gulf Indian High School

Report published in February 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Gulf Indian High School

Location	Al Garhoud
Type of school	Private
Website	www.gihs.sch.ae
Telephone	04-2824455
Address	POBox 646, Dubai, UAE
Principal	Mr. Alexander Coates Reid
Curriculum	Indian (CBSE)
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Kindergarten to Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	2,118
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 17th October 2012 to Thursday 20th October 2012

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The context of the school

The Gulf Indian High School is situated in Al Garhoud. At the time of the inspection, the school had a total roll of 2,118 boys and girls, aged three to 18 years. It operated a split-shift timetable. Morning sessions were for boys and girls in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and girls only in the primary, middle and secondary phases. The afternoon session was for boys only. Almost all students were from Indian families.

The school followed the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum and students were entered for CBSE examinations.

There were 117 teachers. Most school staff were qualified, the majority of whom held at least a single degree whilst a few staff in Kindergarten held only a higher secondary qualification. Two-thirds of Kindergarten teachers did not have the relevant qualifications or training.

The school has a history of high staff turnover, and it remained high. The morning shift had appointed 19 new teachers, whilst the afternoon shift had ten new teachers, some having joined just three weeks prior to inspection.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The Gulf Indian High School provided an acceptable quality of education. It had some important strengths, which included students' personal and social development in the middle and secondary sections of the school. The quality of teaching for effective learning was acceptable in all sections of the school. Less successful teaching was seen in Kindergarten, although some of these teachers were beginning to adopt improved teaching methods to promote early years learning. A minority of staff, particularly in the middle and secondary phases, had poorly developed skills to manage student behaviour. The school had failed to identify students with special educational needs and provide appropriate support. Leaders in the school had focused too much on school discipline and had insufficient regard for student learning. Self-evaluation was weak and improvements plans were not monitored to see if they were working.

The school had made unsatisfactory progress towards addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Attainment and progress in Arabic was now acceptable in the primary phase but

remained unsatisfactory in the middle and secondary phases. Limited progress had been made in developing students' problem-solving skills in mathematics in the primary sector but not elsewhere. The school provided more opportunities for the development of independent scientific skills. The school had not improved teaching by using a greater variety of teaching strategies. The curriculum had been broadened by the introduction of one lesson per week which was used to provide more creative and artistic opportunities. However, the school had yet to improve the impact of class observations and develop a shared understanding of good-quality learning and teaching. The capacity to improve was limited because of weaknesses in the quality of leadership and a failure to address recommendations in the last inspection report. The school was at a high risk of its overall performance being unsatisfactory at a future inspection if current recommendations do not receive an effective response.

Key strengths

- Outstanding attitudes and behaviour of students in the middle and secondary parts of the school;
- Students' outstanding understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture in the middle and secondary parts of the school;
- Students' outstanding civic, economic and environmental understanding in the middle and secondary parts of the school.

Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Arabic, especially in the middle and secondary phases of the school;
- Improve learning and assessment by giving clearer information about the objectives and intended outcomes of lessons and using a variety of learning activities that allow students to think for themselves and assess their own progress;
- Ensure that the school adopts appropriate behaviour management strategies, particularly with older male students;
- Review the time allocated to Islamic Education and Arabic and ensure that the school is compliant with Ministry of Education requirements;
- Improve the quality of leadership by delegating more responsibilities to senior and middle leaders to focus on improving quality of learning;
- Make self-evaluation and improvement planning more realistic by better use of quality benchmarks and focus on student learning in lesson observations.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
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	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

Attainment in Islamic Education was good in Grades 1 to 12. Most students had good recitation skills of The Holy Qur'an. Attainment in Arabic was acceptable in the primary section but unsatisfactory in middle and secondary sections. Attainment in English, mathematics and science was acceptable in all phases. In English lessons and in their recent work, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with curriculum standards. In mathematics, most students in the middle

and secondary grades reached expected levels as set by the school and by the CBSE. In science, an increasing emphasis on investigation activities promoted students' understanding of cause and effect which helped enhance scientific understanding. However, only a minority of students took the CBSE exams in Grades 10 and 12 and their results did not represent the overall attainment of students in the school.

Students in all grades taking Islamic Education made good progress. However, girls' progress was slightly better than that of boys. Primary students made acceptable progress in Arabic but older students' progress was unsatisfactory. Acceptable progress in English, mathematics and science was made by students of all ages and, in secondary science, progress was good. In English lessons, most students made expected progress as measured against their learning objectives; but less progress was made in unfamiliar contexts. In mathematics lessons and in recent internal tests most students made expected progress but higher achieving students did not make sufficient progress.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

Attitudes and behaviour were good across Kindergarten and the primary phase and were outstanding in the middle and secondary phases. Students were respectful, responded very well to adults and were sensitive to the needs of other students. Older students had very positive and responsible attitudes. Most students made healthy food choices and had a well-developed awareness of healthy lifestyles. Attendance was acceptable. Islamic, cultural, civic, economic and environmental understanding was good in

Kindergarten and the primary phase, and outstanding in the middle and secondary phases. Older students understood the relevance and impact of Islam on contemporary society and the wider world. Students talked confidently and with pride about the multi-cultural nature of Dubai. They had good knowledge and showed respect for local traditions and appreciated the values and heritage of the UAE. Students understood their obligations as members of a school community, and the senior girls held key posts of responsibility. Older students had detailed knowledge of how Dubai had developed as well as an excellent understanding of the economics that underpinned the success of Dubai.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable in all phases. Most teachers had good subject knowledge, but some did not use correct English in worksheets. In some good lessons, effective interactions led to active student participation. In Kindergarten, however, and in most other sections of the school, the emphasis was on teacher-led dissemination of knowledge rather than on skill development or understanding. Questions almost always required factual answers, not reasons. Lesson planning was rarely effective. Objectives and purposes of activities in almost all lessons were unclear and consequently, lessons lacked focus, direction and pace. Objectives were not revisited to assess learning at the end of lessons. Kindergarten and primary teachers sometimes made effective use of resources, such as flash cards to teach grammar or counting. In a minority of lessons, there were too few resources and this affected the quality of learning. Almost all lessons did not challenge students appropriately and the minority of students were capable of more whilst others struggled without sufficient help. The development of enquiry and critical thinking skills was limited in most lessons except in an excellent Grade 12 debating lesson where students researched and applied their knowledge to real world events. Teaching in other subjects was acceptable but better practice was observed in music, accountancy and business studies, where it was mostly good or better.

The quality of learning was acceptable in all phases. It was a stronger feature of lessons than teaching, because most students were enthusiastic and took responsibility for their own learning. The oldest students were mature, highly motivated learners who were prepared to support and challenge each other. Learning was frequently limited because students did not ask questions. This showed their lack of ability to apply enquiry, research or critical-thinking skills. Secondary students collaborated well on tasks and sometimes with role play but were often limited in their progress by their teachers' weak planning. The majority of primary students lacked the skills to co-operate effectively in groups, usually because the groups were too large, and all were keen to contribute. Effective connections to other subjects or the real world and everyday life were rarely provided in lessons.

Assessment was acceptable across all phases of the school. Assessment systems and processes were restricted to recording of test data. Most students were seldom involved in assessing their own learning. The recently launched on-line portal contained graphs, marks and grades. Most teachers had some knowledge of individual strengths and weaknesses and this was shared orally with parents during open meetings. However, the use of information to plan lessons or guide students in their next steps was not observed during the inspection.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum was of acceptable quality across the school as it met the needs of most students. Curriculum leaders had improved the breadth of provision since the previous inspection by adding athletic, artistic and musical opportunities for students. The curriculum was non-compliant with respect to provision of Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language. Continuity and progression in the curriculum were limited to what was available in the books used in each phase of the school. Continual progress for all students was not planned; consequently, a few students did not make the progress of which they were capable. A review of the curriculum had taken place since the previous inspection; but students with special educational needs had not been accurately identified and, thus, their needs were frequently not met. The more able students frequently waited during lessons, because they were not sufficiently challenged by the curriculum. Enrichment of the curriculum was available to students outside the classroom by means of more challenging homework and school house competitions.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

The school's arrangements for health and safety were acceptable. Safety procedures for transportation and fire drills were effectively organised and routinely logged. Policy statements for discipline and child protection were appropriately in place but were insufficiently detailed in relation to expected practice and staff responsibilities. The school had a suitable range of fire and safety equipment. The buildings were well maintained and regularly cleaned. The playground, which was predominately concrete and sand, was an area where students were prone to minor injuries. Medical records were systematically compiled and medical incidents were carefully monitored. The school promoted healthy living through information sent to parents and references in science and the physical education programme. Supervision around the school was effective to ensure that student movement was orderly and safe.

The quality of support for students was good in Kindergarten and acceptable in the primary phase. It was unsatisfactory in the middle and secondary sections for boys. Relationships between staff and students were mostly good. Some of the behaviour management strategies used by a few staff with middle and senior boys were inappropriate. The checking of attendance and punctuality was good. Parents could track their children's attendance and their journeys to and from school on line. Identification of students with special educational needs and providing in-class support for these students were unsatisfactory.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

Quality of leadership was unsatisfactory and weaknesses pervaded all levels of the school. Leaders were focused on maintaining high standards of discipline and had a narrow interpretation of the curriculum. There was a limited vision to improve student learning and leaders were uncertain of how to make the required improvements. Delegation of responsibilities lacked clarity. Relationships between a few leaders were unsatisfactory and impeded development of the school. There were good daily communications as senior staff regularly patrolled the corridors. The capacity to improve was unsatisfactory, although some leaders had potential for improvement if they were provided with support and guidance.

Quality of self-evaluation and improvement planning was unsatisfactory. Satisfactory improvement plan structures were used but actions were not evaluated or monitored. Analysis of exam results lacked sufficient detail to enable action to be taken for improvement. Self-evaluation was incomplete and over-inflated most judgements. Regular internal lesson observations were made as part of teachers' appraisal; but there was no account made of student learning, and judgements were made subjectively without exemplar benchmarks. Insufficient progress had been made in responding to the recommendations of the last inspection report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. Responses to parents' questionnaires and a meeting of parents during the inspection indicated that most parents were satisfied with communications between home and school. There were excellent internet links that enhanced two-way communication. Parents had regular updates on the grades obtained by their children but had no comments from teachers on what needed to be done to improve. Links with the wider community were limited, but internet links with a school in the UK were beginning to be established.

Governance was acceptable. A governing body was in place with regular meetings scheduled. The governing body scrutinised examination data provided by the school, but its role in holding the school accountable was limited by lack of detail in the data submitted. Governors were aware of parental

concerns, such as standards in Arabic and had taken steps to resolve problems. Stakeholder representation was restricted to senior staff and two parents.

Management, staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable overall. The school managed its daily routine adequately with four different timetables and two separate shifts. Most staff were appropriately qualified with the majority having at least a degree and few with higher secondary qualifications. The school had no programme for professional development or induction policy for the many new staff in place. Facilities in the school were adequate but most classrooms were crowded and not conducive for active learning. The shift system gave prime time to girls, whilst boys were compelled to attend school in the afternoons.

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	580	36%
	Last year	548	34%
Teachers	3		3%
Students	40		55%

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

A significant minority of parents responded to the survey, slightly more than last year. Almost all parents indicated that they were satisfied with the quality of education available at the school. Parents generally agreed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects, with the exception of Arabic. Parents' opinions were mostly positive across the different aspects of school provision, but a few indicated that there were not enough clubs and activities provided, a view shared by the senior students. Only three teachers responded to the survey. Slightly more than half of the senior students responded to the survey. As did the parents, most students held positive views about the school. A few students disagreed that behaviour was good amongst their peers. Most students believed that their teachers had the necessary skills to teach them, but a few did not. A majority of students agreed that school leaders listened to their opinions, but a few disagreed that this was so.

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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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