

INSPECTION REPORT

The Indian Academy

Report published in February 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The Indian Academy

Location	Muhaisnah 4
Type of school	Private
Website	www.indianacademydubai.com
Telephone	04-2646746
Address	muhaisnah-4
Principal	Ms. KavitaVij
Curriculum	Indian
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-12 / KG 1-Grade 6
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	241
Largest nationality group of Students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	16 th to 18 th December 2013

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The context of the school

The Indian Academy is a new school serving students from Kindergarten (KG) 1 to Grade 6 (aged three to 12 years). It is situated in the Muhaisnah 4 district of Dubai. The school's vision is to provide a 'Happy, caring, stimulating environment where children will recognise and achieve their full potential to make their best contribution in society'. At the time of the inspection the school was in its second year of operation and had grown from an initial intake of around 50 to a roll of 241. About half of the students (120) were in Kindergarten 1, with 44 in Foundation 2 and the rest spread between Grades 1 to 6. Grade 6 had been in operation for four months and had only 7 students at the time of the inspection. It would be inappropriate to report this as a separate phase this year. The Kindergarten curriculum was based on a modified version of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. From Grades 1 to 6, the curriculum was an adaptation of the ICSE Indian model. The school had taken part in International Benchmark Testing (IBT) and National Science Olympiad exams but no results had been processed.

Only five students were identified as having special educational needs. There is no separate section in this report on 'How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?' because the students may be identifiable.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Students were polite, courteous and keen to learn;
- The school's partnership with parents was strong and supported students' progress;
- Students' personal development was good. Students showed a good understanding of environmental responsibility and local culture;
- Students were happy to come to school and felt safe and well cared for;
- School leaders were committed to raising standards and developing the school.

Recommendations

Raise students' attainment by:

- increasing the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for the higher attainers;
- using assessment information, (including observations and international benchmarking) to match work more closely to students' abilities.

Improve learning skills by introducing more opportunities for students to:

- work collaboratively;
- undertake research and investigation including through the use of ICT.

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- aligning activities, and the way they are used, more closely to learning objectives;
- using probing questions to promote critical thinking, assess students' progress in lessons and to adjust teaching accordingly;
- taking a more rigorous approach to the evaluation and monitoring of teaching.

Progress since the last inspection

This was the first inspection of the school

Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

[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?

In Islamic Education, students had an acceptable knowledge and were able to explain the five pillars of Islam and the steps required to perform group prayers. Students in all grades had a clear understanding of Islamic manners, but Holy Qur'an recitation skills were still developing. In Arabic as an additional language, most students were able to follow instructions accurately and respond correctly to simple questions. Speaking skills were mostly limited to short answers and few extended sentences were used. In English, students were eager and active listeners with strengths in oral language. Foundation Stage students showed growth in initial language skills, while primary students demonstrated adequate reading and writing competencies. In mathematics, Kindergarten children could identify numbers and their names. They used mathematical terms and could count and add single digit numbers. In primary grades, most students could identify shapes and quantities and relate these to objects around them. For example, they could show the oval shape in the six 'thinking hats' in class. By Grade 6, students could identify ratios and differentiate between a fraction and ratio. In science, Kindergarten children's knowledge and understanding was a stronger aspect than their exploratory skills. They could observe well but had too few opportunities to investigate real life objects for themselves. In the primary grades, students could explain the functions of the skeleton and circulatory system but had limited skills in designing their own investigations.

Most students made acceptable progressing their understanding of the main concepts of Islam. They steadily increased their understanding of Islamic values and morals. Progress was weaker in developing recitation skills of the Holy Qur'an. In Arabic, students made adequate progress in developing their speaking and writing skills. Their listening and reading development was more secure. The majority of students had progressed to a basic knowledge of grammar which they applied in new situations. Students' progress in English was not consistent across all phases. Most students made better progress in speaking and listening than in reading and writing. Students made expected progress in mathematics in relation to their starting points. For most, progress was acceptable and, in some lessons, it was enhanced by links with real life experiences. Kindergarten children developed skills of scientific classification as they grouped types of animal models according to features. Grade 2 students extended their knowledge of topics such as forces and nutrition. By Grade 6, they had developed practical skills but progress in scientific investigation was limited.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Learning skills were acceptable in the two phases. Students had positive attitudes towards learning and, when given the chance, took responsibility for their own learning. They knew what they were expected to do and responded well in most lessons. In Kindergarten they were eager and asked the teacher if they could start their task as they waited patiently for their turn. They worked together productively when given the opportunity. Most students could make clear connections between their learning and the real world. For example, they could tell the difference between equal and unequal when the teacher cut an apple into two unequal parts. Student interactions with their teachers and each other were courteous and respectful. They made connections between new and previous learning and occasionally found things out for themselves. ICT was used in a limited way to support their learning. However, students' access to new technology was limited and this restricted their rate of progress. Independent learning was underdeveloped.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal responsibility, behaviour and attitudes were good. Students were courteous and considerate both in lessons and when moving around the school. Most were friendly and confident towards each other and adults. They readily answered questions and offered help when needed. Relationships with other students and staff were respectful and most students demonstrated sensitivity to the needs of others as they shared equipment or took turns. Students showed excellent understanding of healthy living and all took part in activities to promote it. Attendance for the most recent term was good, and almost all students arrived punctually for lessons.

Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness was good throughout the school. Students appreciated the relevance and impact of Islamic values on everyday life in Dubai and reflected upon key messages in relation to their own lives and experiences. Where appropriate, they regularly put into practice what they learned from Islamic lessons. Emirati traditions and cultural heritage were well known and understood by students who recognised their importance and value to people in the UAE. Students fully appreciated and celebrated their own culture and were aware of the diversity of cultures in the world.

Students understood their responsibilities as members of a school community and their contributions to the local community were constructive, as for example, when they took food supplies to workers in a local labour camp. Students had a positive work ethic. They had a good understanding of environmental

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sustainability, conducting a special assembly on environment day and pledging to save water and trees. Students contributed to the 'Clean City Drive' as they undertook a clean-up activity in Pond Park. They also took responsibility for the care of trees they had planted on the school premises. As part of their conservation activity, students acted as AC and light monitors in every class to ensure no energy was wasted.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable across the school. Most teachers had good subject knowledge but there was some inconsistency in the effectiveness with which they used this to meet the range of students' needs. Teaching strategies were varied and mostly effective and classroom management skills were strong, particularly at the Kindergarten. Most teachers planned lessons with clear learning objectives and the majority shared them with students. Teacher-student interactions were positive and in the best lessons there was good use of dialogue and questioning. Most teachers knew their students' strengths and weaknesses. In the most successful lessons, teachers provided opportunities for students to discover things for themselves and connected learning to real life experiences. Planning for different levels of ability was not a strong feature of most lessons. The level of challenge for high achievers and support for low achievers did not always meet the needs of these learners. Didactic teaching in a few lessons led to some disengagement of students and did not sufficiently promote investigative and research skills in science and problem-solving in mathematics. Teachers established very good relationships with their classes which encouraged students to cooperate and participate.

Assessment was acceptable. In the Kindergarten, teachers maintained a detailed record of children's performance in each focus area and used the information for planning next steps. Some teaching assistants made useful notes on children's achievements during lessons. In the primary grades, most teachers used questions at the end of the lessons or asked students to summarise the key learning points. In the better lessons teachers also used worksheets with differentiated activities to check the students' understanding of the concepts covered. Students' performance was regularly tracked and individual targets were set through ongoing assessment activities. Results were analysed but did not always translate into next steps for learning. Verbal feedback to students was useful, but marking did not always help them to know how they could improve. Some assessment activities were not sufficiently challenging. Assessment relied too heavily upon internal judgments by teachers although the school had begun the process of using international benchmark testing to compare students' performance in a wider context.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum was broad and balanced. In the Kindergarten, the school had introduced a modified version of the Early Years curriculum, working towards appropriate learning goals. In the primary grades, students studied more defined subject knowledge and skills, using the ICSE curriculum as a base. The mission of the school; to create a stimulating learning environment nurturing student potential in academic, creative, personal, physical and moral development, was evident in many aspects of the curriculum. Emirati culture and tradition were woven into the core subjects. The transition between Foundation Stage and Primary was smooth. There was a system in place to review the curriculum, and staff regularly discussed what had worked well or what needed adjusting. Links between subjects were often made so that students could use what they knew from one area to help their learning in another. Music, art, yoga, dance and drama were used to enhance the curriculum, as were additional languages of French and Hindi. Opportunities for independent learning were sometimes evident but there were too few activities designed to assist students in exploring their own learning or developing research and critical thinking skills. A range of extra-curricular activities and events provided additional variety and interest.

Some modifications to the curriculum were made to meet students' needs, including a range of arts activities to enhance learning and provide for particular interests. The two areas where specific adjustments were made included modifications to provide for newly arrived students with limited or no skills in English, and adjustments for students with special educational needs. Students in the Foundation Stage had some opportunities for individual choice as a part of the Early Years curriculum, particularly when they engaged in 'free flow' activity.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Provision for the health and safety of students was good. Students' safety was overseen well throughout the day, with staff on duty during breaks and good supervision in play areas. Corridors and playgrounds were monitored by CCTV at parents' request. Students were able to play and run around in a safe environment. The school nurse provided very good care for students and shared relevant medical information with staff. A child protection policy and reporting system was in place and all staff were aware of reporting requirements to keep students safe. Transportation was orderly and well supervised. There were regular fire drills. Records were kept and safety equipment was well maintained.

The quality of support was acceptable. Staff and students enjoyed good relationships and behaviour was well-managed. There were effective systems to promote attendance, and punctuality was good across the

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school. Students with special educational needs (SEN) were admitted to the school. Efforts were made to identify those with a particular need, based on teacher and specialist classroom observations and information received from parents or previous schools. Most teachers provided adequate support in class for students with SEN, and additional support was provided in intervention sessions. Systems were being put in place to improve the accuracy of the identification of individual needs and a specialist was appointed to ensure substantive support was available when required. Staff were caring and attentive to the well-being and personal development of all students.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The principal had established a committed senior team to oversee the development of this new school. A clear vision for the school's overall aims had been set and effectively communicated to all key groups. Responsibility was widely distributed and many strategic decisions were the result of extensive consultation through bodies such as the 'Quality Control Committee'. In the short time since the school was established, aspects such as clear procedures for communication had been successfully embedded but other improvements, such as plans for raising standards, had not yet achieved their full impact. Relationships between leaders and staff were very positive and there was the capacity to make required improvements.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The Self-Evaluation Committee had placed a high priority on understanding the school's performance and making plans based upon identified needs. Many of the school's priorities for development were correctly identified but the accuracy of some evaluations, such as the level of student's performance in key subjects, was less secure. This was because comparisons were based upon internal evaluations without the benefit of sufficiently rigorous criteria or externally validated performance data. The school was in the process of filling this gap. Most development plans were realistic and achievable but success criteria were not described clearly enough to assist future evaluations.

Relationships with parents and the community were good. Parents were very positive in their views of the effectiveness with which the school communicated and involved them in its day to day life. They were pleased with homework arrangements and felt they had good opportunities to support and encourage their children's learning. Parents appreciated the information they received through reports and meetings with teachers and felt that the school welcomed their views. Links with the local community were in development but those already established had proved productive.

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Governance was acceptable and included a good representation of stakeholders, including parents, and a broad range of expertise. Governors were responsive to the views and suggestions of parents. The Board held the senior leadership to account for the school's performance through requiring regular reports but no performance targets involving standards had been set. Governors were actively supportive of the school and ensured statutory requirements were met.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. Routines and procedures for day to day organisation were efficient and effective. Staff were well qualified, appropriately deployed and clear about their responsibilities. Staff training was given a high priority but was not always aligned well to the outcomes of performance management. The building had plenty of space for the numbers on roll and was clean, well maintained, and accessible to all students. Learning resources had been steadily improved and were adequate overall, although in-class ICT facilities were limited.

[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	117	63%
	Last year	The school was not inspected in 2012-2013	
Teachers	21		88%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged 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.

Almost all parents felt that their children were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. Most felt that progress was good in Islamic Education and the majority felt the same of Arabic. All parents felt that the school was well led and that teachers provided a good quality of education. Almost all were aware of the school curriculum and felt that their children found work interesting. Most felt it offered a wide range of subjects and activities. Communication with the school in the form of meetings and reports was seen as effective by almost all parents and they felt that their opinions were listened to. Almost all parents were happy with the amount of homework their children received and all felt able to help. Teachers felt that their students were well behaved, well supported and treated fairly. They felt involved in the school's development. Parents considered that the school prepared their children well for the next stage of their education. Almost all felt that their children were safe on school transport and, without exception, they considered them safe and well looked after in school.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

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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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