

INSPECTION REPORT

Apple International School

Report published in April 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Apple International School

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Location | Al Qusais |
| Type of school | Private |
| Website | www.apple.sch.ae |
| Telephone | 04-2638989 |
| Address | Al Qusais 1, P O Box 33963, Dubai |
| Principal | Mrs. Hyacinth John Pulickan |
| Curriculum | UK |
| Gender of students | Boys and Girls |
| Age / Year Groups | 3-13 / Foundation Stage - Year 8 |
| Attendance | Acceptable |
| Number of students on roll | 1962 |
| Largest nationality group of Students | Pakistani |
| Number of Emirati students | 25 (1%) |
| Date of the inspection | 18th to 21st March 2013 |

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The context of the school

Apple International School is situated in Al Qusais. At the time of the inspection, the school had a roll of 1962 students, aged from three to 13 years, from Foundation Stage to Year 8. The school curriculum was based on the English National Curriculum in English, mathematics and science together with Ministry of Education curricula for Islamic Education and in Arabic. A minority of students were presented for ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research) tests.

Students were grouped into a total of 73 classes, with 27 in the Foundation Stage, 41 in the primary stage in Years 1 to 6, and 5 classes in the secondary school stage in Years 7 and 8. Twenty-five students, just over one per cent of the roll, were Emirati. The highest numbers of students were from Pakistan, the Philippines and India.

There were 108 full-time teachers, including the Principal and the senior leadership team. Most teachers had appropriate subject qualifications, but only a majority had a teaching qualification. Teachers were supported by 26 teaching assistants. At the time of the inspection, 40 per cent of teachers were in, or had just completed, their first year in the school.

Overall school performance 2012-2013

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Improved attainment and progress in the primary school stage in Arabic as a first language and in Arabic as an additional language;
- Students' good behaviour and attitudes towards learning in the primary and secondary stages;
- Improvements in teaching and learning in the primary school stage, in assessment at all stages, and in curriculum in the Foundation Stage.

Recommendations

- Continue to improve attainment and progress in all subjects, especially in Arabic as an additional language in the secondary school stage;
- Promote appreciation of local and wider cultures more effectively, and encourage all students to take responsibility for their own learning about the environment and for work in the community;
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment across all stages;
- Improve the quality of health and safety, work with parents and others to reduce traffic-related hazards to children and adults at the start and end of the school day, and encourage students to wear seatbelts on buses;
- Improve the management and facilities of the school and provide an adequate level of resources where necessary.

Progress since the last inspection

- Staff in the Arabic department had worked with some success to maintain the improvements noted in the last follow-through inspection report although further work needed to be done in Arabic as an additional language in the secondary school stage.
- The school had effectively encouraged students to improve their behaviour and attitudes towards learning. Student attentiveness and engagement in lessons continued to be variable, depending on the quality of teaching;
- The quality of teaching continued to be variable, and the proportion of teachers new to the school was a possible factor in this. Nevertheless, the school had managed to improve the overall quality of lessons in the primary school stage. Assessment had improved at all phases.
- The quality of the curriculum at the Foundation Stage had improved.
- Improvements in governance and the overall quality of leadership had been maintained. However there were still shortcomings in the quality and provision of facilities and resources.

Trend of overall performance



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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|---|------------------|------------|----------------|
| Islamic Education | | | |
| Attainment | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as a first language | | | |
| Attainment | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Arabic as an additional language | | | |
| Attainment | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Unsatisfactory |
| Progress | Not Applicable | Acceptable | Unsatisfactory |
| English | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Mathematics | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Science | | | |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Progress | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Curriculum quality | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

| | Foundation Stage | Primary | Secondary |
|--------------------|------------------|------------|------------|
| Health and Safety | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |
| Quality of Support | Acceptable | Acceptable | Acceptable |

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Attainment was acceptable in all subjects in all stages, apart from in Arabic as an additional language, which was unsatisfactory in the secondary school stage. In Islamic Education, most students could recite Qur'an and explain the meanings of Qur'an and Hadeeth. Students' application of Fiqh law and Islamic concepts to real life needed to be developed further. In Arabic as a first language, most students were able to use standard Arabic, but few had skills in extended writing. In Arabic as an additional language, most students were able to identify familiar words and pronounce them clearly. Speaking and writing skills were limited, especially in the secondary stage. In English, speaking and listening skills were stronger than other skills. Most students had age-appropriate skills in reading and writing. In the secondary stage, students experienced difficulty in analysing texts. In mathematics, children in the Foundation Stage attained best in number work. In the primary and secondary school stages, numeric and shape skills were acceptable. Mathematical investigation skills were underdeveloped. Students developed acceptable skills of science enquiry from the Foundation Stage onwards. Across the school, observation skills were better than the ability to plan and carry out fair tests.

Progress was acceptable in all subjects in all stages, apart from in Arabic as an additional language, which was unsatisfactory in the secondary school stage. Students' progress in Islamic Education in using Tajweed rules was weak. In Arabic as a first language, progress in writing was less rapid than progress in other language skills. In Arabic as an additional language, most students in the secondary school stage did not achieve the expected age-appropriate progress. In English, most students made age-appropriate progress in speaking and listening. Progress in writing and analysis of texts was more variable. In mathematics, the confidence of children in the Foundation Stage grew during practical activities. Most students made appropriate progress from year to year in number and shape. Students in science developed an increasing breadth of scientific knowledge as they progressed from year to year, but investigational skills were less well developed.

[View judgments](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

The attainment and progress of the small number of Emirati students in the school were acceptable overall. While some attained above the class average in some subjects, others were below. There was no overall pattern and, taken as a whole, the attainment and progress of Emirati students were in line with that of other students. Given the small number of Emirati students, at most one or two in a number of classes, teachers provided good attention to meeting their learning needs.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Most aspects of students' personal and social development were acceptable, apart from attitudes and behaviour, which were good in the primary and secondary school stages. Almost all students in primary and secondary showed mature behaviour. Some showed a particularly good response when opportunities to take responsibility were offered to them, for example in the social and personal development committee. At all stages, positive attitudes towards learning were not encouraged when lessons did not engage the students. The school promoted healthy lifestyles well, and students responded appropriately. Attendance was acceptable, and punctuality was good. The students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, culture and global awareness were acceptable across all phases. They had a clear understanding and appreciation of the expectations of an Islamic society. They demonstrated their respect to each other's culture alongside their own. Their understanding of local tradition, the heritage of the UAE and the culture of students from other lands was less well developed. Students, particularly the older ones, understood their responsibilities as members of school community. They could suggest how to improve the school and community. Most students enjoyed their work and showed suitable application. They had an acceptable awareness of environmental change and the importance of conservation.

[View judgments](#)

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching was acceptable. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and knew how to teach at an age-appropriate level. Almost all teachers completed a common lesson plan. Teachers explained at the beginning of lessons what students were going to learn. They used a range of resources to support learning. In a majority of lessons, teacher-student interactions were positive and enhanced learning to an acceptable level. In a few classes, teachers made good use of open questioning. In most classes, the promotion of critical thinking through the use of open-ended questioning was underdeveloped. Although differentiated worksheets were used in a majority of lessons, learning tasks were not well matched to the needs of less

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able and more able students. Lessons were often too teacher-directed. These lessons tended to lack challenge and had limited opportunities for students to develop independence and enquiry skills.

The quality of learning was acceptable. Students were eager learners and when lessons were student-centred rather than teacher-directed, students were highly engaged in their learning. Almost all students had positive attitudes and were willing to do what teachers asked of them. They did not always know what they needed to do next to improve their learning. Most students worked collaboratively, shared resources and supported one another. A majority of older students used information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. In most subjects, students acquired knowledge and skills, but their learning was not regularly applied to real life.

Assessment was acceptable. In the Foundation Stage, most teachers regularly evaluated the knowledge and skills of individual children. In all stages, an electronic portfolio was used which contained results from a range of assessments. In some cases, the data had been used well to inform curriculum planning and work for individual students. This project was at an early stage of development. The use of data, including comparisons of students' progress with international levels and expectations, to improve learning needed significant improvement. Closed questions directed at the whole class were more common and less effective than open questions targeted at individuals to assess and develop understanding. Worksheets and diagnostic tests included some opportunities for students to assess their own work. Overall though, students' self- and peer-review of work and target-setting was underdeveloped. Teachers marked students' work regularly but did not provide written feedback on how to improve.

[View judgments](#)

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

The curriculum was acceptable in all stages. Staff reviewed it regularly, and it now provided more opportunities for cross-curricular links. Revisions had also enhanced students' learning and personal development. The curriculum was broad and balanced across all key subjects. Teachers ensured continuity in students' learning by following more closely the structures of the revised Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the National Curriculum for England. Medium and short term curriculum planning aimed to meet the needs of most groups of students. Overall though, provision was weak for students with special educational needs, including gifted and talented students. Teachers were planning to improve the development of students' investigative, critical thinking and learning skills but they did not always implement the plans sufficiently in lessons. Visits and themed 'special days' enhanced students' learning. Students could also take part in a range of academic, sporting and creative activities.

[View judgments](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The arrangements for health and safety were acceptable in all stages. School transport arrangements met Road Transport Authority (RTA) requirements, but the school did not ensure that younger students wore seat belts on the buses. Inconsiderate driving outside the school by those collecting students in private cars put students and staff at risk. Staff maintained and cleaned the school to an acceptable standard. There were effective procedures and record keeping. Fire drills were held regularly. They were evaluated and good records were kept. The medical team monitored students' health, contributed effectively to the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and ensured that healthy snacks were available at break-time. Training had raised awareness of child protection procedures for all staff and students.

The quality of support for students was acceptable across the school. Staff knew most of their students well. They provided effective counselling and guidance for their subject choices and future education, and for their social and emotional needs. These relationships underpinned the management of behaviour and care. They also nurtured the confidence of students to ask for staff help, if they needed to do so. Effective systems supported staff to monitor attendance and punctuality. Absences were followed up, reasons were recorded and parents were contacted if school attendance was of concern.

[View judgments](#)

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

Identification of students with special educational needs was at an early stage of development. As a result, provision was limited. Identified students received effective support outside the classroom from two recently appointed specialists. However, not all teachers were aware of how students with special educational needs learn, and so they did not consistently provide the support that would help the students to make good progress. Students made good progress in classes in which they received focused support, and where they could learn through practical activities and in co-operation with their peers. Screening of children for gifted and talented abilities had not yet been carried out and so provision for them was limited in almost all classes.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was acceptable. A chief executive officer for this and another school was regularly present in the school. His impact was to be seen mainly on health and safety and regulation aspects. He provided a good link between the governing body and the school senior leadership team. He and the Principal had a clear vision for improving the school. Given the high turnover rate of teachers, there was an ongoing need for senior staff to explain the vision and how the school was going to achieve it. Leadership responsibilities were distributed well, and most leaders discharged their duties to an acceptable level. Some of the senior

staff at the level below Principal showed good leadership. Relationships and communications were positive. Working together, staff had improved a number of key aspects of the school's work. Capacity for further improvement was acceptable.

The quality of self-evaluation and school improvement was acceptable. Senior staff had a broadly realistic view of the school's performance. Their view of teachers' capabilities was not always accurate. A good feature was the self-evaluation by teachers of their own training needs. Professional development activities were linked to the findings. Analysis of assessment data was not systematic. The school improvement plan and the strategic plan contained appropriate priorities.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents had a wide range of opportunities to be involved. 'Interaction week', when parents could observe and contribute to classes, was a positive feature. The views of the parent forum influenced the school's work. Communication was regular and helpful. Reports to parents on their children's learning did not always set out next steps in learning. Links with the community were widespread.

Governance was acceptable. Parents and the local community, including business people and educationists, were represented on the board and gave advice and support. Funding for projectors in every classroom had been provided. The governing body exercised accountability through receiving reports, regular contact, and through listening to views, including those of the parent forum.

Management was unsatisfactory. School procedures and day-to-day routines were adequate overall. The first floor was not accessible to those with mobility difficulties. The majority of classrooms were small and overcrowded. In particular, science and ICT facilities were too small, inadequate in number, and, along with the library, poorly resourced. Facilities for sport other than swimming were limited, and there was insufficient shade in outside areas. Most staff used the e-learning gateway, laptops and data projectors in their classrooms, although the effectiveness of use was inconsistent. The high turnover of staff had an adverse effect on school provision.

[View judgments](#)

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 | 300 | 28% |
| | Last year | 420 | 30% |
| Teachers | 87 | | 82% |
| Students | There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school | | |

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

Just over one quarter of parents responded to the questionnaire, a slight drop on the previous year's figure. Most teachers responded. There were no senior students of appropriate age to complete the questionnaire. Most parents who responded were satisfied with the quality of education. They thought that the quality of teaching and learning was good, and that their children enjoyed school. They were happy with the progress their children were making in English, mathematics and science and, to a lesser extent, in Islamic Education and Arabic. They thought that their children were well looked after and safe. While almost all teachers thought that students used a range of technology tools in their learning, only a majority of parents thought so. Similar differences in view applied to extra-curricular activities and leadership. In addition, only around half of parents who responded thought that they were involved in decision-making, while most teachers thought 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.

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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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