









Irtiqa'a School Inspection

AY 2024/25

Islamiya English School

Rating: Good

School Information

General Information	
 Name	Islamiya English School
 Esis Number	9109
 Location	23,Bumiyyah St,Al Danah,Abu Dhabi 22218
 Website	http://www.islamia.ae/
 Telephone	026417773
 Principal	NAZAR DAWOOD ANWAR
 Inspection Dates	20 to 23 Jan 2025
 Curriculum	British

Information On Students

Cycles	Cycle 1 - Cycle 2 - Cycle 3 - KG
Number of students on roll	2144
Number of Emirati students	4
Number of students of determination	2
Largest nationality group of students	Pakistan - Egypt - Bangladesh

Information On Teachers

Number of teachers	121
Nationalities	India - Pakistan - Egypt
Number of teaching assistants	19

Changes since the previous inspection

Since the last inspection in 2021, the school's overall performance has improved from Acceptable to Good, demonstrating the school's commitment to continuous improvement and implementation of development strategies.

Overall, students' attainment in Arabic-medium subjects (AMS) has strengthened across various phases, with some phases maintaining their previous levels and no regression observed. Students' achievement in Arabic as a first language remains at Good in Phases 1, 2, and 4, while Phase 3 has improved from Acceptable to Good, driven by stronger performance in lessons and the majority of students making better than expected progress. Arabic as a second language reflects a similar pattern, with achievement in Phases 2 and 3 remaining at Good, while in Phase 4, achievement has improved from Acceptable to Good. This is attributed to students demonstrating better language proficiency and comprehension skills in both lessons and assessments, reflecting enhanced teaching practices. Students' achievement in Islamic Education has remained at Good in Phases 1, 3, and 4, while Phase 2 has improved from Acceptable to Good. Similarly, UAE social studies is now judged Good in Phase 2 after previously being rated Acceptable, while it remains Good in Phase 3. These improvements are attributed to stronger student performance in both lessons and assessments.

Conversely, English-medium subjects (EMS) have shown notable improvements in some phases, while a few phases have experienced a decline, and others have maintained their previous performance levels. Students' achievement in English remains Acceptable in Phases 1 and 2. In Phase 3, although attainment has declined from Good to Acceptable, progress remains Good, indicating that students continue to develop their literacy skills. In mathematics, achievement in Phases 1 and 2 has improved from Acceptable to Good, driven by stronger student

performance in lessons and a demonstrated improvement in mathematical skills in both internal and external assessments. Achievement remains Good in Phase 3, maintaining steady performance levels. In science, students' achievement in Phase 1 has remained Acceptable, while in Phase 3, it continues to be Good. In Phase 2, achievement has improved from Acceptable to Good, attributed to better student performance in lessons and external assessments, supported by more effective teaching strategies that have had a positive impact on student outcomes. In Phase 4, while attainment has declined from Good to Acceptable, progress remains Acceptable, showing that students are still making expected gains despite the shift in attainment classification.

As a result of improved student progress, learning skills have also shown significant improvement, with Phases 1 and 2 progressing from Acceptable to Good, while in Phases 3 and 4 they have been consistently maintained at Good. Students actively engage in learning and collaborate well, particularly in higher phases where they articulate their understanding and identify areas for improvement, especially in Arabic-medium subjects.

Performance standard 2 (PS2) related to students' personal and social development, as well as their innovation skills, were not evaluated in the previous inspection. Personal development is now rated Acceptable across all phases, primarily due to persistent issues with attendance. However, students demonstrate Islamic values, reflected in the school's Good rating for this indicator and the development of an on-site Qur'anic center. Social responsibility and innovation skills remain Good across all phases, with students actively engaged in sustainability projects and community initiatives.

Overall, teaching quality, particularly in Arabic-medium subjects (AMS), positively impacts student achievement. Teaching in Phases 1 and 2 have improved from Acceptable to Good, while Phases 3 and 4 remain Good. However, teaching in English-medium subjects (EMS) is less consistent, affecting student progress in those areas. In Phase 1, teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge, though clarity on how young learners acquire knowledge varies. In Phases 2, 3, and 4—especially in AMS—teachers plan engaging lessons, use resources creatively, and implement diverse activities to sustain student interest. Opportunities for critical thinking, problem-solving, and suitably challenging tasks for both high and low attainers are not fully developed. Assessment in Phases 1 and 2 remains at Acceptable, while in Phases 3 and 4, it has declined from Good to Acceptable. Assessment practices across phases are adequate, though the use of both internal and external data to inform instruction is inconsistent. The analysis of data to address the full range of student needs varies, impacting differentiation and inclusivity in lessons.

Curriculum design and adaptation (PS4) were not assessed in the previous inspection and are now both evaluated as Acceptable across all phases. The school offers multiple curricula and has recently introduced the Cambridge framework in EMS, which requires additional time and support to achieve full effectiveness. The curriculum adequately reflects UAE culture and Islamic values. However, EMS in Phase 4 lacks a formal English subject offering to align with the A-level program, limiting progression opportunities in that phase. Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of a large majority of students, with stronger progression currently evident in AMS.

The health and safety of students remain a key strength of the school, consistently judged as Good. Since the previous inspection, the school has enhanced its infrastructure to facilitate mobility for all students, including those with physical disabilities. Effective safeguarding systems, well-maintained facilities, and structured safety protocols contribute to maintaining high standards of student welfare. However, the promotion of healthy living requires further development, particularly in fostering student-led initiatives and integrating well-being practices into daily routines. The overall care and support provision has declined from Good to Acceptable, with identification and tailored support for students with additional learning needs, including students of determination and gifted and/or talented learners, emerging as a key area requiring further attention. A more structured and comprehensive approach to student support remains crucial to sustaining improvements across all performance standards in the UAE Inspection Framework.

Leadership and management continue to be Acceptable in four out of five elements, with the effectiveness of leadership improving from Acceptable to Good. Self-evaluation, partnerships, governance, and management and staffing remain Acceptable. Leaders at various levels have successfully raised standards in AMS and are now tasked with extending these advances to EMS and other school areas. Guided by a principal and Board of Trustees who emphasize Islamic values and UAE national priorities, the leadership team cultivates a welcoming culture of kindness and belonging. They are increasingly inclusive in decision-making, engaging a wider range of stakeholders in shaping the school's direction. However, self-evaluation, improvement planning, and accountability require more consistent implementation to ensure inclusively sustainable progress across all performance standards.

The school's efforts towards meeting their targets on international assessments: TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS

The school actively benchmarks student attainment against international standards, participating in multiple external assessments to evaluate performance on a global scale. In 2023, students took part in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for Years 5 and 9, assessing proficiency in mathematics and science. The school also participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2022, measuring student performance in mathematics, science, and reading, and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2021 to assess reading literacy.

Recognizing the importance of international benchmarking, the school has implemented measures to familiarize students with the assessment formats of PISA and TIMSS. PISA-style questions have been integrated into English, science, and mathematics lessons, and a dedicated learning and testing room has been introduced to support student preparation. However, the impact of these strategies on student outcomes is not yet evident. While the school is aware of the challenges in meeting PISA and TIMSS proficiency targets, structured interventions at the middle leadership level remain underdeveloped. Additionally, parents are not consistently informed of the school's international assessment targets or the additional support and resources available for student improvement.

Performance in standardized and international assessments

The following section focuses on the school's performance in standardized and international assessments.

Standardized Assessments

The school utilizes GL Assessments, developed by GL Education, a standardized assessments used internationally to measure student attainment, progress, and cognitive abilities to evaluate attainment and progress in mathematics, science, and English for students from Year 4 to Year 10.

- In AY2023/24, assessment results in the Grenada Learning Progress Test (GL PT) for mathematics indicate Very Good attainment in Year 4 and Good attainment in Year 9. However, attainment in Years 5, 7, 8, and 10 is Weak, while in Year 6, it is Very Weak. In terms of progress, students across all grade levels from Year 5 to Year 10 demonstrate Weak progress, except for Year 6, where students make Acceptable progress.
- In AY2023/24, assessment results in the Grenada Learning Progress Test (GL PT) for science indicate Outstanding attainment in Year 4, Very Good attainment in Years 9 and 10, while in Years 5, 6, and 8, students attain at Weak levels in line with international expectations. Regarding progress, students in Year 5 and Years 8 to 10 demonstrate Weak progress, while those in Years 6 and 7 make Acceptable progress.
- In AY2023/24, assessment results in the Grenada Learning Progress Test (GL PT) for English indicate that students in Year 4 attain above expectations, achieving Good outcomes, while students in Year 5 attain at Weak levels. Regarding progress, students in Years 6 and 8 to 10 demonstrate Weak progress, while those in Years 5 and 7 make Acceptable progress.

International Assessments: TIMSS, PISA, PIRLS

In the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) 2022 results for 15-year-old students:

- In reading literacy students achieved a score of 505.6, exceeding the PISA international average of 476 but below the school's target of 521.
- In mathematical literacy, students achieved a score of 490.5, exceeding the PISA international average of 472 but below the school's target of 508.5.
- In science literacy, students achieved a score of 483.1, exceeding the PISA international average of 485 but below the school's target of 539.2.

In the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) 2023 assessment, student performance varied across grade levels and subjects:

- In Grade 4 mathematics, students achieved a score of 500.61, exceeding the school's target of 468.25.
- In Grade 8 mathematics, students achieved a score of 530, below the school's target of 542.
- In Grade 4 science, students achieved a score of 514.87, exceeding both the international average and the school's target of 461.77.
- In Grade 8 science, students achieved a score of 544.53, exceeding both the international average but below the school's target of 507.31.

The PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) 2021 results:

- In Grade 4, students achieved a score of 542.73.

Reading

The school actively promotes reading as a fundamental skill across all phases, integrating structured reading initiatives into daily practice. From Phase 1 to Phase 4 across Foundation Stage (FS) to Years 13, students participate in daily read-aloud sessions, fostering a love for reading and enhancing comprehension. A variety of school-led and national reading initiatives, including "The National Reading Challenge" and "I Read Challenge," encourage engagement with literature. The school library serves as a central hub for reading, housing over 12,000 books, including 1,540 Arabic titles (654 fiction and 886 non-fiction), and offering both English and Arabic subject-specific materials to support curriculum requirements.

For the Arabic curriculum, classrooms are equipped with leveled reading books, and teachers guide students through structured reading sessions, assessing skills and facilitating discussions. All students from Years 2 to 5 participate in the school-organized Arabic Writing Competition, while the school radio provides a platform for students to present and engage in reading aloud to peers. Reading is further promoted through a range of school-wide events such as Book Fairs, Reading Week, and mini-theater performances based on well-known literature. Students have opportunities to interact with both Emirati and international authors, participate in book exhibitions, and compete in poetry and storytelling competitions. October is dedicated to reading celebrations, during which students across all year groups complete assigned reading-related tasks such as book cover designs and written summaries.

The library is designed to enhance accessibility and engagement, featuring a fully solar-powered facility with a sound booth for audiobooks, multiple computers for accessing e-books and conducting research, and a variety of seating arrangements, including cozy reading corners, interactive games, and a role-play section for younger students. Every classroom from FS to Year 13 is stocked with books, fostering a print-rich environment. Weekly, a dedicated library period is allocated for all students. Additionally, buddy reading is encouraged, with older students supporting younger peers in developing fluency and confidence. The school takes pride in student achievements, with students earning international recognition, including a Guinness World Record for the youngest person to publish a book, *The Lost Rabbit*.

Despite these strengths, reading is not explicitly taught to Year 13 students within lessons. While a reading track analysis is conducted by the English Coordinator from FS to Year 13, reading data is not systematically shared among teachers, limiting the integration of reading across subjects. Additionally, professional development on the teaching of reading skills is limited, reducing the effectiveness of reading instruction. Addressing these gaps through improved assessment sharing and targeted training would further strengthen the school's reading provision.

Strengths of the school

- The school fosters a strong sense of national identity, with students demonstrating pride in UAE heritage and

a deep appreciation for Islamic values.

- School leaders, including the principal and the Board of Trustees, have cultivated a caring and nurturing environment, ensuring students feel a strong sense of belonging.
- Student achievement in Arabic-medium subjects has consistently improved and is now good across nearly all phases.
- Teachers, particularly in Arabic-medium subjects, demonstrate strong subject knowledge, delivering engaging lessons that promote responsible student attitudes, respect, and collaboration.
- Health, safety, security, and behavior management procedures are well-established and effective, contributing to a safe and orderly learning environment.

Key Recommendations

1. Raise students' attainment and progress to a consistently good or better level in all core subjects and phases, by:

- improving attainment in English-medium subjects to a good level across all phases and raising achievement in Arabic-medium subjects to a very good level.
- enhancing students' research, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills across all subjects, integrating digital technology and providing more opportunities for students to present their work in varied formats and to different audiences.
- ensuring all students, particularly low and high attainers, receive consistent levels of support and challenge to promote higher levels of academic success.

2. Strengthen teaching, assessment, and curriculum provision, by:

- developing Phase 1 teachers' pedagogical approaches, ensuring they create consistently age-appropriate learning environments to accelerate student progress.
- improving lesson planning to ensure differentiated instruction, allowing all student groups to reach their full potential.
- reviewing internal assessment systems, particularly in English-medium subjects, to ensure validity, reliability, and closer alignment with curriculum standards.
- enhancing the effective use of international benchmarking data to drive student achievement improvements.
- personalizing learning activities more effectively, ensuring they align with students' current knowledge and abilities.
- strengthening cross-curricular links in English, mathematics, and science, ensuring connections between subjects are meaningful and carefully planned.
- fully embedding the new Cambridge curriculum across Phases 2, 3, and 4, ensuring teachers fully understand its structure and expectations.

3. Improve the identification and support for students with additional learning needs, including students of determination and gifted and/or talented students, by:

- strengthening the school's identification processes for students of determination to ensure more accurate and timely recognition of students needing additional support.
- increasing the use of effective screening tools and training staff to identify and support a wider range of learning needs, including gifted and/or talented students and those requiring differentiated instruction.
- improving the implementation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to ensure that targets are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and used effectively in lesson planning.
- providing a broader range of in-class support strategies and differentiated learning activities to ensure students with additional learning needs receive tailored support within lessons.
- expanding opportunities for gifted and talented students beyond extracurricular activities, embedding more challenge within daily lessons to develop higher-order thinking skills.

4. Improve the impact of school leadership, by:

- strengthening leadership accountability at all levels, ensuring leaders take full responsibility for school performance and student achievement.
- enhancing the monitoring of teaching and learning, ensuring it aligns with the UAE inspection framework and focuses on all students and student groups' progress and outcomes.
- further refining the performance management system, ensuring it accurately reflects expectations for both teaching quality and leadership effectiveness.
- encouraging the structured sharing of best practices in teaching, learning, and assessment, particularly between Arabic-medium and English-medium subject leaders.
- providing specialized professional development for leadership teams on inclusive education, ensuring they can effectively oversee and drive improvements in provision.

5. Improve students' performance in the international assessment PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS by:

- strengthening the use of inquiry-based learning and problem-solving activities to develop students' critical thinking and analytical skills.
- using detailed analysis of PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS results to identify specific skill gaps and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.
- incorporating real-world application tasks aligned with international assessment expectations, particularly in science and mathematics.
- strengthening parental awareness and involvement through workshops and resources that support learning at home, reinforcing key skills tested in PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS.
- aligning curriculum content more closely with PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS frameworks to ensure comprehensive coverage of assessed skills.





Overall School Performance: **Good**

PS1: Students' achievements					
Subject		KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Islamic Education	Attainment	Good	Good ↑	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good ↑	Good	Good
Arabic as a first language	Attainment	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good ↑	Good
Arabic as a second language	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good ↑
	Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good ↑
UAE Social Studies	Attainment	Not Applicable	Good ↑	Good	Not Applicable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Good ↑	Good	Not Applicable
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable ↓	Not Applicable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Not Applicable
Mathematics	Attainment	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Good
	Progress	Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Good
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good	Acceptable ↓
	Progress	Acceptable	Good ↑	Good	Good
Learning Skills		Good ↑	Good ↑	Good	Good

PS2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Personal Development	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

PS3: Teaching and Assessment

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Good 	Good 	Good	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable 	Acceptable 

PS4: Curriculum

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

PS5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection / safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Care and support	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓	Acceptable ↓

PS6: Leadership and Management

The effectiveness of leadership	Good ↑
School self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable