

Al Khulood Kindergarten Inspection Report

Report published May 2010

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Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report

Outstanding – exceptionally high quality of performance or practice.

Good – the expected level of quality for every school in Dubai.

Acceptable – the minimum level of acceptability required for Dubai. All key aspects of performance and practice in every school should meet or exceed this level.

Unsatisfactory – quality not yet at the level acceptable for schools in Dubai. Schools will be expected to take urgent measures to improve the quality of any aspect of their performance or practice that is judged at this level.

Al Khulood Kindergarten (KG) was inspected in January 2010 as part of the regular inspection of all schools in Dubai. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated children's achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on children's progress in Arabic, English (in KG2), mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Karama, Al Khulood Kindergarten is a public school providing education for children from ages three to five years. The school follows a Ministry of Education curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 103 children on roll. The attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents were very positive about the school and had noticed an improvement over the last year. They were particularly pleased with the good range of activities, the quality of teaching and the strong links with parents and the community. A few parents were concerned about the teaching of English.

How well does the school perform overall?

Al Khulood Kindergarten provided a good standard of education and had improved in almost all areas since the last inspection. Attainment and progress in Arabic were good across the school. Standards of writing in KG2 had improved, and there were increased opportunities for children to listen and speak, for example, with the use of puppets in the activity area. Attainment and progress in English remain acceptable. Children listened well and, by KG2, could understand simple instructions. A few could read a simple sentence, which demonstrated improvement in this area since the last inspection. Attainment and progress in mathematics were good in oral, practical and written work. Work in KG2 was challenging and built on work in KG1, which was an improvement since the last inspection. In science, which was taught mainly through topics, children's attainment and progress were good. They used

their scientific knowledge in other subjects and almost all reached higher than expected standards. Children's attitudes, behaviour and relationships throughout the school were good. They responded well to the more interactive approach to teaching and learning that had been promoted. Their attendance over the last term was good. Children's civic understanding was good. Most of the students showed an understanding of their responsibilities in the school community, as expected from their age level. They were proud to be Muslim, which reflected in their daily behaviour and they were aware of Dubai's multi-cultural society. Children's economic and environmental understanding was also good. They collected materials for recycling and took part in a "Clean the World" project.

The quality of teaching and learning was good and had shown a marked improvement since the last inspection. Lessons were well planned, well paced, child-centred and catered well for children's different interests and abilities. Children enjoyed learning through supervised and non-supervised activities. The quality of the curriculum was good, and the school used a thematic approach very effectively. The quality of protection and support for the children was good; on school buses, when arriving and leaving school and throughout the day. The monitoring of children's attendance and punctuality had improved since the last inspection and the tracking of children's academic and personal development was used effectively.

The leadership and management of the school were good. The school had made good progress in addressing all of the recommendations of the last inspection report. The Principal was very pro-active and fully involved in the daily life of the school. Teachers were aware of their roles and responsibilities and worked effectively in teams. The school's self-evaluation was good. The greatest progress had been the widening of the curriculum and the improved planning of work for children of different abilities. The school had good links with parents. Useful workshops were run for parents and they were provided with a comprehensive amount of information. The governance of the school was acceptable, as a small working group of parents had been initiated as a first step towards a full governing body. The school had good accommodation; buildings were clean and well maintained. The school was well staffed and had an extensive range of learning resources.

Key features of the school

- There had been significant improvements in teaching since the last inspection and, in almost all lessons, teachers catered for children's diverse needs and abilities;
- Since the last inspection children had become more responsible for their own learning and were self-disciplined;
- There had been significant improvements in the assessment and tracking of individual children;
- Teachers provided a very good range of cross-curricular opportunities in almost all lessons, with a strong emphasis on science;
- Learning was promoted not only in classrooms but in all activity and play times and also in the canteen.

Recommendations

- Continue to improve the teaching of English by using repetition and dialogue more effectively;
- Further improve and develop the extensive individual assessment data, so that it can be analysed more easily at year and whole school levels, in order to evaluate and provide for the needs of different groups;
- Produce an overview of the enhanced curriculum and formalise review procedures;
- Continue to develop strong links with the community and further extend and formalise existing links with other schools so as to improve transition and children's learning outcomes;
- Continue to develop the composition and role of the governing body to include a wider range of stakeholders and to hold the school to account for the education it provides.

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

Attainment and progress in Arabic were good across the school. Most of the children in KG1 and KG2 had good listening and speaking skills. Most of the children in KG1 read letters and circled words matched to given images. They developed their language by identifying the days of the week, colours and weather conditions, using Arabic. Most of the children in KG2 could identify letters as being at the beginning, middle, or end of given words. Children could link and match images with words and could write their names correctly. A few wrote in the wrong direction, but names were easily recognisable.

Attainment in English was acceptable. In KG1 children had knowledge of some English words and rhymes. For part of the week, children in KG2 follow the normal curriculum, taught entirely in English. They responded well to these lessons taught in English and could understand simple instructions such as, "Close your eyes." They gave answers to questions such as "What colour is it?" They were able to recognise letters at the beginning, middle and end of a word, and could identify a word beginning with a particular letter. They could write their own names and count to thirty in English. A few were able to read a simple sentence, such as "I clean my teeth." While progress was acceptable, better progress could have been made if repetition had been used more effectively and if any lack of understanding had been clarified occasionally by the use of the equivalent Arabic word to ensure that progress in other subjects was not detrimentally affected.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were good in oral, practical and written work. In KG1, children were able to count to ten and almost all recognised both Arabic and English numerals. They were able to demonstrate one-to-one correspondence using blocks, toys and other everyday objects. Children progressed at individual rates through practical activities involving measurement, colour and shape. In KG2, children continued to make good progress through continuous practical and challenging tasks, such as finding missing numbers, calculating difference and using shapes of different sizes to create structures. Most could count to forty and a minority were sorting objects by twos. All children used their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as during science activities.

Attainment and progress in science were good. Almost all reached standards higher than internationally expected. Many of the topics planned were science based and therefore knowledge of science was gained in a range of ways. The children's scientific skills and knowledge were regularly promoted through investigations and through the teachers' questions. Almost all KG1 children could explain the nature of leaves and plants by colour, shape and texture. They could demonstrate, through trial and error, how magnets and magnifying glasses worked, and used them appropriately. Children in KG2 could tell the difference between healthy and non-healthy foods and could classify a random range of everyday foods, using food items, photos and replicas. They explored smell, touch and sound through 'corners' and activities and made good progress in relation to their individual starting points.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of the children throughout the school were good. In classrooms and in the play area children were keen to participate and moved sensibly from one activity to another. They showed a good degree of self-control in their daily lives, both in and out of the classroom, and were aware of routines such as those expected of them at snack time including clearing away their own plates. They responded well to the more interactive approach to teaching and learning promoted in classrooms and enjoyed their lessons. Most children demonstrated good behaviour and positive relationships. Children's attendance in the last term was good.

Children's civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good. The children had a good understanding and appreciation of the history of Dubai that was age appropriate. They were able to talk about different issues and changes that had taken place in Dubai, such as the Metro. Children had a good understanding of Islam's impact on Dubai and were aware of the different nationalities that lived in the city. They were able to name some of these nationalities, such as Arab, Pakistani, and Filipino.

Children's economic and environmental understanding was also good. They visited local businesses, such as a wood factory, baker and tailor. They could name some of Dubai's distinguished projects, such as Burj Khalifa, malls and main roads as appropriate to their age level. They demonstrated a good understanding of the need to protect the environment by helping keep the classroom tidy, contributing to recycling by collecting papers and newspapers, and participating in the school "Clean the World" project.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good and reflected a marked improvement since the last inspection. Teachers planned work well at different levels: weaker children were supported and more able children given more challenging work. In Arabic lessons, teachers used different teaching methods and made good use of visual aids and discussion to promote learning. Mathematics and science lessons were well planned, well paced and catered for children's different interests and abilities. Science was interactive and practical. Children were encouraged to experiment, predict and describe what they observed. All children were actively engaged in most lessons and teachers used questioning well to ensure extended answers. In the small minority of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, lessons lacked purpose and clear objectives and there was too little intervention from the teacher in independent activities. Occasionally, time was wasted moving from whole-class teaching to group activities. In English, students were not encouraged to repeat new words after the teacher to improve their speaking skills, and the teacher did not clarify the meaning of new words with the Arabic equivalent to aid understanding on the few occasions when it was clear that this would have been helpful.

The quality of children's learning was good. Children could explain what they were learning. The school provided a rich environment both in the classrooms and in the free-play area to support learning through activities. Playtimes were also planned exceptionally well to promote learning. The learning of social skills was effectively promoted, for example, at snack time. Good learning took place through role-play activities, such as in a doctor's surgery with the school nurse, and through a shopping topic. Children also learned well because of their good listening skills and the interesting topics, for example, when listening to a story about how bees collected nectar to make honey.

Assessment was good. There had been a significant improvement in this area since the last inspection with detailed individual records being kept of the children's attainment and

progress. When children were working at different activities, teachers worked with a focus group and monitored their progress, showing them how they could improve and assessing the overall standards reached. Teachers' records were used to plan future lessons, matched to children's different needs. Children were encouraged to assess their own work, whether with the teacher or working on their own at activities, by putting a sticker against their name if they considered they had completed an activity correctly. The school had a considerable amount of useful assessment data on individual children, but had not yet brought it all together so that an overview of standards in the school could be analysed and acted upon.

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

The quality of the curriculum was good. The school used a thematic approach which had been reviewed to identify where there was repetition or a need for additional material. However, no further review had been scheduled, as part of the school's self-evaluation process, to assess its impact. The school lacked an overview of the whole curriculum. Staff had visited other public and private schools to gain a better understanding of how to enrich and deliver the curriculum, and how to develop different teaching and learning strategies. Additional resources were made by teachers and parents using recycled materials and sources, such as the internet and a school support consultant, were used to good effect. To enhance the core curriculum the school had produced well-presented workbooks, which were complemented by differentiated worksheets and extensive practical activities. Cross-curricular links were very well developed both in lessons and in the activity and play areas. All sessions of the day were used to implement the curriculum, with all subject areas available as activities during break and snack times. Classrooms and other areas displayed an array of children's current work and photos of activities, such as visits to the Metro and to a hospital. Very good use was made of local visits to widen the curriculum and enhance the children's learning. As well as curriculum enrichment visits to community centres, there were visits from parent speakers and the ambulance and police services. The themed curriculum provided material and activities that catered to individual differences and encouraged an investigative approach. There had been significant improvement since the last inspection in the continuity of the curriculum to ensure that children were challenged and interested. Parents received at least weekly updates of the curricular topics and advice on how to support their child and contribute to the school resources, trips and activities. Through successful participation in the Kindergarten Dubai Challenge for reading, staff successfully promoted children's love of books.

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school provided good protection and support to children, in school, on school buses, and when arriving and leaving school. All appropriate medical checks and records were maintained and monitored, as was any dispensing of medicines. Children with allergies or other chronic complaints were known by staff and appropriate levels of support were provided. Children used sanitising gel to clean their hands regularly and were aware of the dangers of germs and the importance of cleanliness. During activity times children could become 'little doctors and

nurses' which reinforced healthy practises during directed play supervised by the school nurse. The very good level of support given to children in all sessions, particularly in activity and play areas, promoted children's learning at all times of the day. Children's attendance and punctuality had improved since the last inspection with parents now more aware of the importance of schooling for KG children as a result of improved communication and information. Parents were involved in school through making resources, giving talks, joining parents' teams and by providing a healthy snack once a term for the whole school. The tracking of the individual attainment and progress of children was good and teachers provided advice to children as to how they were progressing. Teachers took action as soon as an issue or learning concerns had been identified as a result of tracking or a teacher's observation. Parents were given helpful monthly reports on their child's attainment and progress. These helped them to know how their child was achieving in relation to expected norms.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership and management of the school were good. The Principal was very proactive and fully involved in the daily life of the school. She and her senior staff were ambitious for the children and all staff had a shared vision, as evidenced in the promotion of children's learning throughout the whole day. Senior staff carried out classroom observations regularly and provided constructive feedback. Teachers were fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and worked effectively in teams, for example, to plan lessons which they then adapted for their own group of children.

The school's self-evaluation was good. The Principal and her senior teachers were committed to improvement and had visited outstanding local schools for further guidance and inspiration as well as researching the internet for good practice found in schools internationally. Parents had been asked what they wanted for their children and suggestions had been incorporated into the annual plan. Good progress had been made in implementing the recommendations of the previous report; the greatest being the widening of the curriculum and the improved planning of all lessons to meet the needs of children of different abilities.

The school had good links with parents. The school had informative induction routines for children and parents before they started school. Useful workshops were run for parents, such as how to use holiday time creatively. Summary reports and a curriculum plan of what would be taught the following week were sent home and were very much appreciated. The two monthly assessments were shared with the parents, and teachers explained how well their child was progressing compared with other children of their age. The school surveyed parents on various topics, such as school buses and school performance. Parents felt very welcome in the school and many helped in different ways.

The governance of the school was acceptable. The Principal reported to a group of parents on a regular basis, sharing information about the budget and how money was spent. They discussed the annual curriculum plans and asked what else they would like for their children. Meetings with this group were planned a year in advance and minutes were kept. However,

there were no members of the wider community on the governing body to represent all stake holders and to hold the school to account for the standards achieved.

The school had good accommodation. The buildings were clean and well maintained. Staffing was good, with a suitable number of qualified staff and additional support staff that made a significant contribution to children's learning. There was a very good range of resources, both commercial and home-made items. However, too many resources were kept in storage. Each classroom had a range of activity centres that supported most areas of the curriculum. But resources in these areas only covered the current topic being studied and resources for previous topics were not used to consolidate learning. English resources, such as picture and dual language books, were not as plentiful as resources for other areas of the curriculum. The school had a library and classrooms had reading corners but, during the inspection, books were not extensively used by children. Whilst computers were switched on in most classrooms they were not used regularly to support learning.

Summary of inspection judgements

In their evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school, the inspection team made judgements about the following aspects of the school's performance.

Four descriptors are: Outstanding; Good; Acceptable; Unsatisfactory.

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic? | |
|---|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Attainment | Good |
| Progress over time | Good |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in English? | |
|--|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Attainment | Acceptable |
| Progress over time | Acceptable |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics? | |
|--|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Attainment | Good |
| Progress over time | Good |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in science? | |
|--|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Attainment | Good |
| Progress over time | Good |

| How good is the students' personal and social development? | |
|--|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Attitudes and behaviour | Good |
| Islamic, cultural and civic understanding | Good |
| Economic and environmental understanding | Good |

| How good are teaching and learning? | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Teaching for effective learning | Good |
| Quality of students' learning | Good |
| Assessment | Good |

| How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students? | |
|--|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Curriculum quality | Good |

| How well does the school protect and support students? | |
|--|--------------|
| Age group: | Kindergarten |
| Health and safety | Good |
| Quality of support | Good |

| How good are the leadership and management of the school? | |
|---|------------|
| Quality of leadership | Good |
| Self-evaluation and improvement planning | Good |
| Partnerships with parents and the community | Good |
| Governance | Acceptable |
| Staffing, facilities and resources | Good |

| How well does the school perform overall? |
|---|
| Good |

Next Steps

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. 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.

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.

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