

Emirates English Speaking School Inspection Report

Pre-Primary to Secondary

Report issued February 2011

Contents

Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report.....	3
Basic information about the school.....	3
How well does the school perform overall?	4
Key features of the school	5
Recommendations.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
How good are the teaching and learning?.....	8
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?.....	9
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	9
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	10
Summary of inspection judgements	11
Next steps	15
How to contact us.....	15

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.

Emirates English Speaking School was inspected in November 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 students' 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 students' progress in Islamic Education (for Muslim students), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Jumeirah, Emirates English Speaking School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from pre-primary (Kindergarten) to secondary, aged three to 18 years. The school follows the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum. At the time of the inspection there were 1263 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents. Parents were largely supportive of the school. Almost all parents thought their child's progress in mathematics was at least satisfactory, with most parents thinking progress in English was at least good. Most parents thought that their child's progress in science was at least satisfactory. Almost all parents' responses showed satisfaction with teaching and opportunities for learning and their child's enjoyment of lessons and enthusiasm for learning. A similar proportion of parents thought that behaviour was at least satisfactory, with the majority stating it was good. The least favourable response was for Arabic. There was a majority who thought their children's progress was at least satisfactory but there was a significant minority who also thought their children's progress was poor. Parents

were unsure about the quality of teaching in the school. A large minority thought it was the area that needed most improvement. The school facilities were another area of concern.

How well does the school perform overall?

Emirates English Speaking School performed to an acceptable level overall. It had responded well to most of the recommendations in the previous inspection report. Progress had been limited in some of the recommendations because there was a lack of information about teaching and learning in the classrooms. However, the school was better placed to know its strengths and weaknesses because of the introduction of self-evaluation and improvement planning processes. The school had responded well to the recommendations about fire drills and governance and there were appropriate systems in place to address these concerns. The school had shown an acceptable capacity to improve.

Attainment and progress were good in Islamic Education and English in the primary and secondary sections of the school. Attainment and progress were also acceptable in mathematics and science throughout all phases of the school, although this was not the case with Arabic as an additional language. These improvements were due to changes in staffing and changes in the curriculum, particularly in Kindergarten. The students' personal and social development was good in all phases, with outstanding economic and environmental understanding shown in the secondary phase. Most students had excellent understanding of the financial challenges facing Dubai and most students were eager to contribute to the future development of Dubai and participate in environmental projects. Teaching and learning and assessment were acceptable in all parts of the school. There was a great deal of variation in the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Kindergarten, where insufficient staff were adapting their teaching fully to the learning needs of young children. The curriculum was acceptable across the school. The introduction of an activities room for Kindergarten classes had begun to make a positive impact on learning but the common lesson time arrangement for students of all ages and even shorter time allocations in Kindergarten made extended investigative work by students very difficult to achieve. The school protected students well. Improvements included the introduction of evacuation practice and child protection policies. The quality of support provided to students remained acceptable. The relationships between staff and students were based on mutual respect and made a major contribution to learning. Leadership and management were acceptable, with improvements in the ability of the school to review its progress and to make plans to move the school on. However, there was a lack of clarity about defining the most important issues to address. The school did not know its strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning because lessons were not visited on a regular basis to check on quality. Partnerships with parents were acceptable. The school still did not make the best use of parents and alumni as a resource. Governance was acceptable. A representative group had been formed which included a parent and two members of the local community. Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable.

Key features of the school

- Good attainment in Islamic Education and English;
- Good personal and social development of students, with outstanding economic and environmental understanding in the secondary phase;
- Good health and safety in all phases of the school;
- A very caring school where staff demonstrate commitment to the well-being of students in their care;
- Receptiveness to change and to put in place a review of the school's performance;
- Improvements in self-evaluation and school improvement planning;
- Limitations to the accuracy of self-evaluation because of a lack of monitoring of teaching;
- Improving governance.

Recommendations

- Improve the quality of learning and teaching by:
 - Introducing a formal process of monitoring classroom practice;
 - Getting agreement amongst the staff about what constitutes good teaching for different phases of the school;
 - Sharing good practice;
 - Ensuring lesson plans include details of how learning will take place and how teachers and students assess their learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - Enhancing self-evaluation so that it makes more judgments based on objective criteria, especially for teaching and learning;
 - Improve development planning by including success criteria and a description of how actions will be evaluated;
 - Making clear the priorities for improvement, both in planning documents and in communications with staff, students and parents;
 - Extend formal self-evaluation and improvement planning to subject areas.

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

Overall attainment and progress in Islamic Education in both primary and secondary school were good. The recitation of The Holy Qur'an was good. Students showed good knowledge of the basic principles and pillars of Islam. In Grade 1, the majority of students could recount confidently and accurately some of the blessings of Allah to man. In Grade 3, most students could explain the importance of prayer as one of the most important means to thank Allah. In Grade 8, students could apply rules of recitation, which enabled them to make good progress. In Grade 11 girls Islamic rulings around marriage. However, the students needed support to develop their higher order thinking skills to be able to present their views in a wider context.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were acceptable in the primary phase, but unsatisfactory in the secondary phase. In Grade 1, the majority of students could name things in the activity room. In Grade 2, most students could distinguish between masculine and feminine, single and plural accurately and confidently. In Grade 6, students showed their skills in speaking, reading and through role playing of mother and father figures. In some classes the majority of students could correctly answer direct reading comprehension questions using an acceptable range of vocabulary. However, in Grade 9 most of the students could not achieve the progress expected of them, especially in the skills of listening and speaking and writing.

In English, attainment and progress were acceptable at Kindergarten but in primary and secondary phases attainment and progress were good. At the end of Kindergarten students were able to sound out and form three-letter words and could hold a simple conversation. By the end of primary, students were able to read a text and write a short synopsis. Examples of creative writing were not evident in many of the students' books. Secondary students were able to present ideas on a given subject with expression and flair. They understood how to use poetic devices and figures of speech with accurate spelling and punctuation. Many were able to read poetry with feeling and emotion and speak with confidence on given topics

The attainment and progress of students in mathematics in Kindergarten, primary and secondary sections were acceptable. Pre-primary children displayed an acceptable level of understanding of numeracy and shapes. Most of the pre-primary and primary students used the four arithmetical operations appropriately for their age. Most of the primary students knew the concepts of shapes, lines, time, measurement, angles. Most of the secondary students could construct geometrical figures and could understand the concept of solids and surface area. They could also solve problems based on quadrilaterals, linear and differential equations and polynomials. Appropriate mathematical terminology was used at primary and secondary levels. Students were less successful at more challenging tasks involving hands-on experience and there were few opportunities to practice investigative and problem-solving skills.

Students' attainment and progress in science were acceptable in all phases of the school. Children in kindergarten demonstrated good factual knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. Kindergarten 2 children could differentiate between different kinds of fruits and vegetables. In the primary grades, students could describe the function of different parts of plants. In the secondary phase, almost all Grade 8 students could describe how earthquakes occurred using high level geological terminology. The majority of Grade 10 students could classify compounds into saturated and unsaturated hydrocarbons. By the end of Grade 12, almost all students could understand the chemical properties of amines and knew the differences between types of mirrors using physical and geometric properties. Students in all grades had no opportunity to use scientific apparatus on their own or to carry out scientific investigations.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good in all phases. Almost all students displayed good behaviour in class and around the school. In lessons students demonstrated positive attitudes to learning. Relationships between staff and students were positive and supportive. Most students were well mannered and polite on arrival and moving around in and out of the classroom. Overall attendance was acceptable and almost all students were punctual to school and to lessons.

Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good across the school. Most students demonstrated a positive approach to their roles and responsibilities, such as being a member of the student council. They demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic values and their impact on contemporary society in Dubai and the wider world. Most students could discuss some of the local traditions and the nature of modern Dubai's local food and games. Most students were able to talk confidently about the positive and negative aspects of Dubai's multi-language and multi-cultural society.

Economic and environmental understanding was good in all phases, except in the secondary school where it was outstanding. Secondary students could discuss Dubai's specific economic strengths and challenges in detail. Most students understood the importance of business, tourism and industry in the economy of Dubai. They had a good awareness of the impact of the global financial situation on the growth of Dubai and the importance of tourism to the economy. The school had an effective project for the recycling of waste material. Most students understood the importance of conserving water in sustaining the environment in Dubai.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was acceptable in Kindergarten, primary and secondary. Teachers had secure subject knowledge and were able to share this at a suitable level with students. The majority of lessons were effectively planned and timed so that students had a clear understanding of what they were going to learn. However, plans were more focussed on teaching rather than the quality of students' learning. In the better lessons, teachers made effective use of resources beyond the textbooks. An example of this was observed in an English lesson about "Motu's Party", where a small number of resources enriched learning. Questions were used to check understanding, but were not often used to extend or develop students' critical thinking. In many lessons, teachers talked too much with little account to how well students were learning. Activities were very often teacher-directed with an over-use of worksheets. Nevertheless, students were attentive and responded quickly to teacher requests. Teachers understood that different groups had different learning needs, but not all lessons addressed them.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable across the school. Students had very positive attitudes to learning. They could work for short periods without teacher intervention, but lacked the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. They were happy to do what was asked of them, but were often passive learners undertaking tasks that did not extend their thinking or help them reflect on their strengths and weaknesses. Younger students did not have sufficient opportunities to apply their learning in different contexts and relate learning to real life situations in order to deepen their understanding. When given the opportunity to do so, older students were able to work collaboratively and engage in research activities and projects, using information and communication technology (ICT). They were able to make articulated responses to difficult questions and were confident to ask questions in order to clarify understanding.

Assessment was acceptable at all stages. The school had a formative and summative assessment framework across all grades that was linked to the CBSE scheme. Detailed information was collated on individual students including subject attainment. Results were rigorously analysed, but there was little consistency in the effectiveness of assessment to inform planning or to match work accurately to all students' needs. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their students was good. However, the quality of marking in students' books was variable and did not always state what students needed to do to improve. In Islamic Education and Arabic, significant numbers of books didn't have accurate marking and homework was not regularly assigned across all classes.

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

The curriculum was acceptable across all sections of the school. It had clear rationale and values within the CBSE framework and was aligned with the school vision. It was reviewed and planned on a monthly and annual basis. The development of the curriculum in pre-primary had begun to meet some of the needs of early childhood education. Children had opportunities to learn in an environment where they could develop their sensory skills through use of audio-visual material. In the primary and secondary sections, a wide range of subjects had been offered to students within the CBSE framework, including art, music, physical education (PE) and three languages other than the compulsory languages. The curriculum was mostly textbook-driven. The allocation of time to such subjects as PE and Arabic language for Grade 9 students was not appropriate. The needs of the less able were beginning to be addressed, but there was not enough attention to the needs of more able students. There was little exposure to challenging tasks that promoted their higher order and critical thinking skills. The curriculum provided students with sufficient opportunities for extracurricular activities like art, cooking and Qirat competitions. Recreational and educational trips were arranged, but there were missed opportunities for cross curriculum work. The collaboration with the community to enhance students learning experiences beyond the school was limited. A notable exception was the involvement of former students to support students in career counselling.

How well does the school protect and support students?

The quality of health and safety for students was good in all the sections of the school. The transport facilities provided for students were good, with attention to maintenance of buses, cleanliness, safety belts and provision of an attendant with pre-primary children. The fire evacuation drill had been conducted once this year and needs to be repeated more frequently, particularly with the younger children. Good records of incidents and subsequent actions taken are maintained. Safe practices were adopted for use of medicines and good vaccination details were kept at the school clinic. Aspects of healthy living were emphasized through the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, posters and in assemblies. A child protection policy has been produced and teachers and students were aware of it.

The quality of support was acceptable throughout the school. Staff-student relationships were very positive. The teachers monitored, recorded and tracked students' progress efficiently by regularly assessing their work and guiding them to bring about improvement in their performance. All members of the school staff are supportive and have a good relation with children and are aware of their individual needs. Students felt that their teachers were firm but fair and that their good behaviour was noticed and rewarded. The school had a good knowledge of students' overall development, including their progress in academic and social aspects. Special needs children were admitted into school, but there was no qualified counsellor. However, the principal and staff took great care with these children and had an action plan to ensure they made progress.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The Principal had established a very caring ethos that pervaded the school. There were good relationships between the Principal and other staff with leadership responsibilities. His commitment to the school was shared by the staff and the majority were prepared to donate extra time or attention when needed. The Principal was an advocate of delegation and had encouraged staff to take on projects that supported school improvement. As a result, leaders at all levels demonstrated the confidence and capacity to make further improvements. Leadership at all levels needed to focus more sharply on what the school needs to do to improve further.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. A development process involving a large number of staff working in groups had resulted in a workable set of documents which laid out the scene for improvement. This work was impeded by the school not having a realistic view of the performance of its teachers or the quality of learning in lessons. The self-evaluation and improvement findings were inadequately shared with the whole staff, thereby limiting their involvement in the actions required.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. A parent with expertise in management consultancy was used to support staff in the implementation of self-evaluation and school improvement planning. The school used ex-students to give individual support in the selection of career paths for higher grades. Almost all parents thought school reports were regular and informative, but they were in the main limited to percentage marks. Target-setting involving parents had recently been introduced with older students. This needed wider implementation with younger students.

Governance was acceptable. A stakeholder representative council had been formed. Membership included a parent and two representatives from the local community. There were plans to consider co-opting ex-students. Only one meeting had been convened at the time of the inspection. Although the agenda included important issues, the minutes indicated there was a lack of scrutiny and challenge, which was essential if there was to be full accountability. The stakeholder representative council was not yet taking an active part in leading school improvement.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. The school had sufficient and suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Furniture, fittings and storage were well worn, but safe to use. The well equipped Kindergarten activity room, home science laboratory and mathematics laboratory were welcome additions that enhanced the learning environment. The corridors and classrooms in the primary and secondary sections were dull and lacked colour and stimulation for 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 Islamic Education?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
0% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress over time	Acceptable	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

How good are teaching and learning?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Acceptable

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.

Copyright 2011

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school. It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.