

# Al Anwaar Kindergarten Inspection Report

Kindergarten

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 Anwaar Kindergarten was inspected in November 2009 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, mathematics and science.

### Basic information about the school

Located in Um Suqaim, Al Anwaar Kindergarten is a public school providing education for boys and girls aged three to five years. The school follows the Ministry of Education curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 245 children on roll. The children's 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 supportive of the school. All agreed that their children liked school and almost all thought that their children's progress in Arabic was good. Most thought that their children's progress in English, mathematics and science was good. All agreed that their children's behaviour in school was good and almost all thought that their children were expected to do their best. Almost all thought that their children were encouraged to be independent and responsible. They thought that teaching was good, that children were treated fairly and that children found activities interesting. Almost all noted that the school gave them good information about their children's progress. They were comfortable approaching the school and believed that staff would resolve problems. They stated that the school consulted them appropriately. Almost all agreed that staff were concerned for children's welfare and they all agreed that the school kept children safe and healthy. Most were happy with how the school supported them to help their child at home. All agreed that the school was well led and had good parental links. They thought that the school had good community links and that it had responded very well to the previous report.

## How well does the school perform overall?

Al Anwaar Kindergarten was a good school. It had made good progress since the previous inspection and had increased the number of outstanding features. The attainment and progress in Arabic were good and children made good progress in mathematics and science. They made acceptable progress in English, and reached acceptable standards of attainment in mathematics and science. Children's personal and social development was outstanding. Children matured well, learned to consider others, to become independent and to have confidence in themselves. They had excellent attitudes to learning and wanted to please their teachers. They learned about their responsibilities towards one another and showed an increasing understanding of Islam and its main tenets. Older children had a fine appreciation and care for their environment, an age related understanding of some of the issues facing Dubai and a real sense of pride in its achievements.

The quality of teaching and learning was good with most of the observed lessons graded as good or better. Staff built children's confidence and were clear about what they expected, so that children knew what to do and responded well. The classrooms were well organised and lesson planning was consistently good. On a few occasions, teachers assessed the children's learning at a slow pace and this did not allow the most capable to achieve more. Children were developing good learning skills by listening carefully, sharing resources and taking turns. Lower attaining children learned to persevere. The staff had improved the way they assessed children's learning by recording their attainment on tracking sheets so as to trace their progress over time. The school appreciated the need to develop a system for analysing this individual child data at a whole school level. The curriculum was excellent. It was planned meticulously to layer activities in and out of school so that all children could learn through vibrant, first-hand experiences. The school had outstanding arrangements to provide a healthy and safe environment, and children felt safe in school. Monitoring was thorough and actions were anticipatory to forestall potential hazards. Children who had difficulties with their learning were usually well supported and encouraged.

The quality of senior leadership was outstanding. The Principal, ably assisted by the senior team, had invoked a desire for further school improvement amongst the whole teaching staff team. Other aspects of leadership and management were mostly good. The school had good systems for evaluating its effectiveness, which enabled it to plan improvement areas in its development plan, which was of high quality. The school's links with parents and the community were good. They added value to children's learning and had helped to create a process of governance in order to assure accountability. Teaching staff were well deployed but other staff needed further training in their support roles. Resources were plentiful but not always used to full effect. The accommodation provided an effective and attractive learning environment.

## Key features of the school

- Children's attainment and progress in Arabic were good and children made good progress in most other subjects;
- Children's personal and social development was outstanding;
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good;
- The high quality curriculum which added relevance to children's learning;
- The excellent health and safety arrangements which supported its children well;
- The senior team provided outstanding leadership, and other aspects of leadership and management were good. The school had improved well since the previous inspection.

## Recommendations

- Encourage greater flexibility in all teaching to improve the progress of higher achieving children;
- Improve English provision to provide more opportunities for English language learning beyond the three periods currently allocated;
- Devise an effective system for analysing data on children's attainment to judge the progress of individuals and groups.

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

Attainment and progress in Arabic were good. Children were learning about letters in both KG1 and KG2. Most children in KG2 were able to recognise the letters at the beginning of a word, in the middle and at the end. They could give examples of names and objects that contained the letters they were learning. In KG2, most children could pronounce unfamiliar words. Almost all children responded to instructions in Arabic, but few were able to converse with confidence. A few children in KG1 were independently writing letters but the majority in KG2 were able to write their names with legible handwriting.

The quality of attainment and progress in English was acceptable, which marked an improvement since the previous inspection. As they adjusted to the new language, KG 2 children's skills in listening were more advanced than their skills in speaking. Their reading skills were at a beginner level and their writing skills were at a very early stage of development. Children could listen carefully and follow simple instructions. Most could greet one another and people new to them. A few could join words together to make simple phrases. Most could read their names and those of their peers. Most could recognise several letters and say the sounds they made such as the letter S. A few could recognise the sound of a letter at the start of a word.

Attainment in mathematics was acceptable and most children made good progress. In KG1, children could count to ten in English and in Arabic. Higher attaining children could count beyond this. Most children could recognise numerals up to ten and say the Arabic words for them. Children enjoyed learning through action songs which included numbers. They could move to the beat, throw a dice and say which number from one to four showed on top. Some could count to five with their fingers to solve simple problems. Whilst most children made good progress, the most able children did not always reach the higher levels. KG2 children slotted numerals into the correct places on a wooden puzzle, counted to 13, 'wrote' it with their finger and counted out 13 cubes.

In science, the children's attainment was acceptable and they made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The children experienced science in many forms through well-thought out topics which were related to life outside school. They could identify different animals and knew about wild animals and pets and the role of a veterinary surgeon. They knew about the different parts of the body and how to keep their teeth and their bodies clean. They were aware of their different senses, and what food looked like before and after cooking. However, their acquisition of scientific skills had yet to be fully developed.

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

Children's attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. Children's behaviour throughout the school day was very positive, consistent and compliant. Relationships between children, school staff and visitors were pleasant and respectful. Children enjoyed being at school and exercised appropriate self-control. Taking into account the children's young age, attendance was good and all absences had a medical reason. Most children were punctual in arriving at school and for lessons.

Children had outstanding civic understanding. Older children were aware of their roles in the school and wider community. They respected and appreciated Islamic values and memorised verses of The Holy Qur'an. They learned about their country through lessons and they named the President of UAE and the Dubai Ruler. Children were able to appreciate their national identity, especially when the national anthem was played and they stood and saluted proudly. They participated fully in the school's celebration of National Day. They knew a good deal about traditional and local heritage such as food and clothes. They understood the environmental issues relating to the use of large cars.

Economic and environmental understanding was outstanding. Children enjoyed Dubai and were eager to contribute positively to its development, aiming to take up occupations that improve the quality of life such as medicine, engineering and teaching. They demonstrated good environmental awareness at playtimes, in keeping classrooms tidy and in organising materials at the end of a lesson. They knew about careful use of electricity and water in school and in their homes.

## How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good. Teachers' planning was detailed, shared across classes and brought together a variety of learning activities. Classrooms were well organised and most teachers used resources well to help children to learn in different ways. Most used a good range of teaching strategies so that children could learn through all their senses. Relationships were caring and gave young children confidence. Teachers helped children settle to their learning by giving clear instructions, expositions and lively practical demonstrations. Sometimes, individual assessments took too long or teachers reinforced learning points that were relevant only to the least able children. As a result the more capable children were sometimes held back. There had been an improvement in the way some teachers set work at different levels of difficulty and asked more open questions. This type of questioning was most effective when teachers worked directly with smaller groups rather than supervising their work.

Children learned best when they were fully engaged in the lessons through using the resources well to secure their understanding. Learning was also good when they had the opportunity to try out their own ideas, such as during some corner time lessons. During the activity lessons in the play area, children set themselves individual challenges, assessed risks, made judgements and worked cooperatively with their peers. The pace of learning sometimes slowed when children were asked to do a task for too long or when learning did not have enough challenge. Conversely, learning accelerated when children were stimulated by first hand experiences such as a traffic count or setting off a fire extinguisher under strictly controlled conditions.

Teachers made accurate assessments of children's learning as they worked and recorded their judgements on what children knew and were able to do on the new tracking sheets. The school planned to evaluate these in the coming weeks to provide a benchmark of attainment from which teachers intended to plan the next steps in individual children's learning. The school also planned to use this system to track the progress of individual children over time. The outcomes of assessments were usually positive because teachers praised children's efforts but they did not use the opportunity to tell children what they would learn next.

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

The school had a high quality curriculum which added relevance to children's learning and was the centrepiece of the school's provision. The topics ensured excellent breadth and balance. Careful planning arranged learning activities in layers. This ensured continuity and progression across the two age groups, and the activities met the needs of children with different styles of learning. For instance, a consistent feature of the school's work was the close links between children's experiences in class and their direct experience in the local community. In class, children often learned through visual and oral means and this was considerably enhanced by exciting, direct experiences engaging all their senses through contact outside class. Two examples from many were when children went out in a school bus to conduct a traffic survey

in their mathematics work, and when an ambulance crew arrived at school to add colour and reality to the children's studies on health. The school made excellent use of local resources, such as the local environment and people who work in it, such as the veterinary surgeon. To help children understand the concept of keeping safe on the roads, the school put in place a road safety area with model cars, roads and street furniture and had received an award for its excellence in innovation. The teaching of English, by a specialist teacher, had been introduced at the start of this term, but the development of English skills in other lessons had yet to be developed.

### How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety arrangements and procedures were outstanding with highly effective arrangements in school to keep children safe and healthy. All school staff and parents understood their responsibilities for children's safety and health. The nurse maintained careful health records and kept parents fully up to date. She tested children's temperatures daily. The school provided children with healthy snacks at mealtimes. Children's arrival and departure were supervised very carefully, although some children did not always wear their seatbelts on the buses despite the school's efforts. The school co-operated with many authorities for safety. Teaching staff conducted evacuation drills with the children involving the Civil Defence and fire drills were routine. Health checks, such as those in the dental clinic, promoted healthy lifestyles effectively and classroom activities supported these. The school administration kept careful records of accidents and the subsequent actions; child protection procedures were good.

Support arrangements were good. Teachers supported the children very well in class and relationships were very positive. The children enjoyed learning new skills and were keen to answer questions and contribute what they already knew to lessons. Those who found learning more difficult were usually well supported and encouraged when working in small groups, but this did not happen in all classes. Where there was a teaching assistant, she was deployed well and contributed to the children's learning effectively. The management of attendance was very thorough, with effective monitoring procedures in place to note those whose attendance was poor. The school tracked the academic progress of individual children well, but had not developed systems to analyse the progress of different groups or children's overall performance.

### How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management was good overall and the quality of senior leadership was outstanding. The Principal worked in close partnership with the Vice-Principal

to lead the school with a clear sense of purpose and ambition. They had directed the school to make very good progress on the recommendations in the previous report. This had led to notable improvements in provision which were starting to have a positive impact on children's progress, for instance, in English. The ambitions within the mission statement were being reached and the promises to parents were kept. The quality of teamwork amongst the staff was highlighted by parents as a significant feature in the school's improvement and this was evident in their willingness to embrace change and work effectively together. Administrative responsibilities were clear and well-delegated. There were good arrangements for teachers to evaluate their own work and the school used this to arrange its professional development programme and build its school development plan. This plan was comprehensive and contained the correct priorities.

The school had made a positive response to the recommendations in the previous inspection report. For example, there was an improvement in the quality of its self-evaluation, in part, through the introduction of a robust system of tracking individual children's progress. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was good and this was an improvement since the previous inspection. The school planned to evaluate this when the first assessments were entered to give teachers a clearer view of their children's progress. However, the system did not have a ready means of analysing the data to give senior managers an overview of class and cohort performance. Senior staff had a good overview of the quality of teaching and learning because of their lesson observations and their close involvement in curriculum planning and review. This helped refine the curriculum to very good effect and set up effective teacher professional development.

Parents were encouraged to be involved with their children's learning through a variety of means, such as the daily book bags and feedback forms. They were invited to come into class to help their child and to assist with activities such as cooking. The school communicated effectively with parents and sought their views through questionnaires, its website and through emails, and through the small Parent Council which was becoming increasingly effective. The school's role in the community was good, with regular visits from people playing important community roles. The children were taken into the community regularly to further their learning and visited homes to talk with older people and learn from their experiences.

Although the school did not have a formal governing body, the parent council contributed to an acceptable level in allowing certain stakeholders to support school staff and hold the management of the school to account.

The school had sufficient qualified teaching and non-teaching staff, but some of the latter group were not always well deployed, as they needed further training in their roles. The environment was highly conducive to learning with well-organised classrooms and adjacent meal rooms, and an attractive central activity area. The school had a large number of learning resources but they were not always used effectively. The use of the local resources, places and people was a significant strength.

## 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	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good

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

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

How good are teaching and learning?	
Age group:	Kindergarten
Teaching for effective learning	Good
Quality of children's learning	Good
Assessment	Good

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

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

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae).

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae).

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