

# Childhood Development Centre 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.

The Childhood Development Centre Kindergarten was inspected in March 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 Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

### Basic information about the school

Located in Al Hamriya, Childhood Development Centre is a public school providing education for boys and girls in Kindergarten (KG), aged four to six years. The school follows a Ministry of Education curriculum which has been amended significantly by the school. At the time of the inspection, there were 76 students on roll. The student 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 strongly supportive of the school with no concerns. They were unanimous in their view that children were treated fairly at school; children enjoyed a full range of activities; they could come to school with comments or complaints; they were fully consulted; children were safe in school and that the school helped them to support their children at home. Parents interviewed as part of the inspection process endorsed these views and felt that communication and the involvement of parents in their children's learning were key strengths of the school. All parents felt privileged to be part of the school's learning community.

### How well does the school perform overall?

The Childhood Development Centre provided its children with an outstanding quality of education and fully delivered its promise to parents. Children made excellent progress and their attainment was outstanding in all areas of learning, with the exception of English, where

attainment was good and progress outstanding, and mathematics, where both attainment and progress were good. This was due to excellent planning, very effective use of resources, excellent strategies for developing student-centred learning and effective deployment of staff. This combination very effectively linked class lessons with activities around the central area during play time. As a result of this and well-focused assessment, children enjoyed learning practically together, made choices and knew what to do to improve at their own pace. Children felt secure in this excellent learning environment, and, consequently, their behaviour was outstanding and they made rapid gains in all aspects of their personal development. They related confidently to others and the excellence of their civic and Islamic understanding was clear in their reverent behaviour when singing the national anthem, their observation of rules and their treatment of one another. For their age, their knowledge of Dubai's past and its current issues was outstanding, as was their economic and environmental awareness.

Children benefited from mostly high quality teaching which was characterised by very effective use of resources, high expectations and a good match of tasks to children's ability levels. Learning in all parts of the school was purposeful and children were always fully engaged. Links in learning were many and varied. For instance, children shared a story in English, identified new letter sounds within the text, acted the story during role play, revisited the story before home time and then shared the text with their parents. Teachers assessed children's progress accurately, keeping a very careful check of milestone achievements through a range of means. Children enjoyed a very wide variety of activities in and out of school as part of an excellent curriculum which was based upon the Ministry of Education requirements but which had been developed by teachers to broaden many aspects of learning. The school had excellent arrangements for children's health and safety which were recognised and appreciated by parents. Parents were also extremely pleased with the care of their children. Parents received helpful advice about learning and their children's progress in school. The school benefited greatly from being a training centre for students and teachers from all over Dubai.

The school's overall improvement was due to the outstanding leadership which included all members of the teaching team in school improvement. Leadership responsibilities extended throughout the school and teams were united and dedicated to the single vision of ensuring children were totally involved in the learning process. The clear commitment to involving parents in learning resulted in excellent links with parents and the community. This partnership had a beneficial effect on the overall school provision as many parents were directly involved in teaching, following training programmes. Self-evaluation and school improvement planning were outstanding because they involved the whole learning community, were continuous and included clear success criteria related to the desired outcomes for children. The school was able to judge the impact of its actions well.

Governance was good and was carried out through a team of committed individuals linked to the school in various ways such as existing and ex-parents, community figures and business people. This group contributed fully to the process of improvement.

## Key features of the school

- The high quality personal development among children which led to outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning;
- The outstanding teaching, curriculum and assessment which led to effective learning and high attainment and progress for all children;
- The well developed systems for keeping children safe and the high quality care and support;
- The outstanding direction and guidance provided by school leaders which empowered all staff and which was focused on continuous improvement;
- The commitment to using the best international research to improve outcomes for all children;
- The excellent links with parents and the community;
- The excellent staffing, facilities and resources for learning.

## Recommendations

- Develop children's skills in reading and writing independently in English through focused staff training in the process of writing;
- Provide more practical number activities to maintain high levels of challenge for all children;
- Continue to monitor safety of children in the car park in relation to cars;
- Further develop the roles and responsibilities of the trustees within the existing framework to ensure this group hold the school to account for standards;
- Continue to share the excellent practice with other schools in Dubai.

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

Attainment and progress in Arabic were outstanding across the school. Most children demonstrated outstanding listening and speaking skills in Arabic language. Almost all children had developed a very wide vocabulary. Almost all children in KG1 could identify, trace, and give examples of the letters they learnt. Almost all children could count in Classical Arabic up to 20. They identified the weekdays and named them correctly. All children in KG2 showed outstanding listening skills and responded accurately to the teacher's instructions. Almost all children were eager to talk and engaged in discussions with the teacher. Most of the children had developed excellent writing skills; they could read and write their full name and many

wrote independently using full sentences. Most children were able to discriminate between the different forms of the same letter depending in its position in a word.

Attainment in speaking, listening and reading English was good and progress was outstanding. Children made good progress in writing. They exchanged verbal greetings accurately, listened very carefully, sang rhymes and used puppets confidently. From early in KG1 they followed instructions well without repetition or guidance and explained their ideas clearly, sometimes using full sentences and a wider than usual range of vocabulary. They could recognise and say the sounds of most letters and were beginning to use them to build one syllable words for example, "cat". Most children in KG were developing a range of reading behaviours. They wrote letters in KG1 and words and phrases in KG2 and all could write their own names.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were good. KG1 children recognised numbers to ten and could count accurately to five. KG2 children could recite and write the numbers to 20. Most could match numerals to ten with pictures. Although they could not all count groups of objects accurately, the higher attaining children could add two numbers together when rolling dice. The majority could recognise numbers 10, 50 and 100 on dirham notes. Children's knowledge of shape and space was developing. KG1 children could match shapes when using a computer program. They made good progress when measuring. They were able to weigh ingredients for a cake and a few children had made a chart to show their heights.

Attainment and progress in science were outstanding. KG1 children worked independently and with adult guidance to grow seeds. They observed what happened to petals when flowers are left in colored ink. KG2 children carried out investigations with magnets and to discover what happened to an egg when left in vinegar. They made predictions, based on prior experience, observed carefully and discussed reasons for the changes they saw. Children's observation skills were developing well. They watched fish in a tank and could talk about similarities and differences between living creatures. They knew that some animals lay eggs and others give birth to living offspring. The majority knew the names of habitats, such as forest, beach and sea.

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

Children's attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. All children were very positive about the centre and enjoyed learning. They were confident and polite, welcomed visitors and were keen to show what they were doing. In lessons, they made decisions, organised resources and tidied up after themselves. At break times children took turns on the large apparatus such as the bicycles and large cars. Children showed care for each other. For example, they were careful when pedalling cycles past others and were quiet when they passed classrooms where learning was taking place. They brought resources for other children and included those with special needs in their play. Children had excellent relationships with adults and with other children; they took turns to speak, listened to their teachers and each other and were quick to praise and applaud each others' achievements. Attendance was good.

Children's Islamic and civic understanding was outstanding. Almost all children were well aware of the various communities that make up the wider Dubai society at an age appropriate

level. All children could list and name the seven emirates and recognise the country's president. Children took responsibilities during lessons such as helping their teacher cleaning and organising the classroom and all cleared up resources after use. All children showed outstanding knowledge of Islam and also displayed excellent understanding of some daily tasks required by Muslims.

Children' economic and environmental understanding was outstanding. Most children were aware of Dubai's main attractions and could list buildings which would be good for tourists to visit. Most children showed excellent understanding of the value of money, the use of automatic teller machine (ATM) cards and could differentiate between credit, ATM, Metro, Salik and telephone recharge cards. Children could name at least six banks in Dubai and knew what cheques were for. Children had an excellent understanding of the need to preserve both water and electricity and automatically switched off lights as they left a room. Children kept the learning environment clean and understood the ways in which they could contribute to protecting natural resources.

### How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was outstanding. Teachers had excellent subject knowledge and understood how young children learn best. They used a wide range of strategies and resources extremely well to motivate and engage children, instil confidence and make learning fun. In almost all lessons, tasks were well matched to children's needs and provided challenge. Almost all teachers managed time and behaviour well, used praise effectively and made timely interventions in children's independent and group learning. Skilled questioning led to high quality verbal responses from children and extended their vocabulary and thinking. Almost all teachers made effective use of other adults in the classroom. In almost all lessons, teachers used a varied tone of voice and excellent visual aids effectively to encourage children to listen carefully and respond enthusiastically. Teachers used songs well to help children remember and to establish routines. Detailed lesson plans stated clear objectives and assessment criteria and made sure that appropriate tasks were matched to the varying needs of all children. These plans created a balance between children making purposeful choices and staff directing them.

The quality of learning was outstanding. Classrooms were attractive and very well organised so that children became increasingly independent. Resources were labelled with words and pictures so that children could return them after use. Charts were at children's eye-level so they could refer to words and numbers themselves and all labels were in Arabic and English. Teachers had excellent skills in questioning and during story-time encouraged children to think about and empathise with characters. The use of timetabled drama sessions enabled children to act out stories and so consolidate learning. Children built up their skills in practical ways. They made independent choices, explored and investigated. They used different senses for learning and made strong connections with their own lives and with other areas of learning. Children loved learning and enjoyed very positive collaborations, taking turns, helping each other and included anyone who wished to be included. Several children with significant learning needs were fully included in all activities.

The quality of assessment was outstanding. Children completed a baseline assessment on entry to KG1 which was the start of recording their progress. Concentrated observations were carried out in the first two weeks to evaluate how each child had adapted to school and to monitor their progress against the baseline. In all areas of learning, children used a range of checklists to mark-off for themselves the work that they had completed and the skills that they had achieved. Older children recorded how well they had completed an activity using a series of symbols. Teachers kept individual portfolios on children containing examples of their work which were dated so that progression could be seen. These examples included simple developmental feedback and photographs of significant milestones in achievement. Teachers recorded skills and knowledge covered in topic charts, and also wrote evaluative comments about children's daily achievements. Data was recorded in graphs and teachers used the information to target children for extra support or challenge.

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

The quality of the curriculum was outstanding. All children, including those with special educational needs, had full access to the curriculum, which was broad and balanced. It included a series of cross-curricular units which has been developed by the teachers. For example, when a medical team visited as part of a unit on people's jobs, children revised their knowledge of colours when looking at parts of the ambulance, equipment and uniform. They recognised numbers and letters on the side of the vehicles and number plates. Parents were kept informed about the topics and were encouraged to develop the work with their children at home. A few parents contributed resources and ideas. For example, in a unit on families, children learned about growing and developing. They visited a family and talked to grandmothers. The Arabic and English curricula followed modified Ministry of Education models; the Arabic curriculum had been extended to provide greater challenge and the English curriculum included writing for a purpose. Each unit had been planned to take children's experiences into account. The curriculum was reviewed regularly and the reviews had led to developments. There were opportunities for children to develop physical skills, using wheeled toys, and large and small physical education apparatus at break time for climbing, sliding and developing balance. There were numerous opportunities to practise fine motor skills, including painting, drawing, colouring and using tools, such as scissors. Children's personal and social development and their creative skills were also developed, for example, through art and craft activities linked to their heritage and culture. Visitors also enriched the curriculum.

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

Arrangements to ensure health and safety were outstanding. There were very effective systems in place for security. The school was well maintained through scheduled cleaning and safety checks. The nurse monitored and provided outstanding level of health care to all children. All medical records were kept up to date with the record of children referred to the clinic. Medications available in the school clinic were kept securely locked. The school had promoted and adopted a healthy lifestyles plan which included contributions by parents and

school staff. The nurse kept good records of incidents where children had been injured and the actions taken to treat these incidents. The children were well supervised during the whole school day. Children were supported to ensure safety as they boarded the buses. However, parents parking their cars near the school caused a potential hazard. The school had responded positively by preventing private cars from entering school.

The quality of support was outstanding. Adults had respectful relationships with children and managed them in age-appropriate ways. The high quality of care and support was extended to children with special educational needs, some of whom received constant encouragement to play a full part in all the activities. There were sufficient adults to monitor children at all times during the day. Staff knew children well and were aware of children's emotional well-being as well as their academic progress. The tracking systems were linked directly to assessment processes which were detailed and meticulous. Teachers recorded children's knowledge skills and understanding in all aspects of learning including social and emotional. They used this information to support vulnerable children and to help challenge able children through individualised learning programs.

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

The quality of leadership was outstanding because it had ensured every member of the learning community was successfully engaged in improving the children's learning experiences and therefore the attainment of the children. The Principal had an excellent view of further school improvement and worked effectively with senior leaders and the whole staff team to bring this about. She had developed a culture of continuous research and improvement in which everyone felt confident to share ideas. All staff were dedicated to their own and the school's improvement and were involved in training and development opportunities at the Centre, elsewhere in Dubai and further afield. Staff were constantly involved in high level professional dialogue which increased their skills and understanding.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were outstanding. The school had responded positively to the recommendations of the previous inspection report through a strong consultative process with staff and parents that drew together the action plan priorities. The school improvement plan drew its priorities from the analysis of children's performance, staff evaluations and parental suggestions. The plan's success criteria were measurable and enabled the school to see how far it had succeeded in enhancing provision or impacted upon children's achievement. The ethos of continuous evaluation had become embedded in the life of the school and meant that review was an automatic process which was linked directly to outcomes for children.

The school's partnerships with parents and the community were outstanding. Parents held the school in high regard, and were willing supporters in its further improvement. Parents met formally four times a year to discuss their children's progress, received weekly preparation letters for the week's activities and summaries of the learning achieved. The school had very positive links with the community through which it developed a programme of visits and visitors related to every curriculum unit. The school had been the focus of a television

programme related to early years learning and had, in this way, shared their ideas with the wider UAE community. The school had effective links with other schools. Strong links existed between the school and various teacher training establishments which meant that student teachers benefited from the expertise of teachers at the Centre.

School governance was good. The school had a board of trustees, a small group of which had been involved in school evaluation and improvement processes and which was currently reviewing its membership to increase the number and range of stakeholders. This group had analysed assessment data and had been consulted on a range of issues. The trustees worked closely with the school to identify issues for the strategic plan and played a key part in developing the school's role in the community through productive media links.

The school had an outstanding range of staffing, facilities and resources. The well qualified staff shared their ideas and planned learning together very well. Facilities were flexibly arranged to provide a very well balanced series of exciting learning opportunities, both during lesson time and break times. The school was making good use of the information and communications technology equipment to support children's learning but this was an area which could be developed even further.

## 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:	KG
Attainment	Outstanding
Progress over time	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?	
Age group:	KG
Attainment	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding

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

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?	
Age group:	KG
Attainment	Outstanding
Progress over time	Outstanding

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

How good are teaching and learning?	
Age group:	KG
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding

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

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

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Outstanding

## 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).

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