

Al Ebdaa Model School Inspection Report

Cycle 1 and 2
Girls

Report published May 2010

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report | 2 |
| Basic information about the school..... | 2 |
| How well does the school perform overall?..... | 3 |
| Key features of the school..... | 4 |
| Recommendations | 4 |
| How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects? | 4 |
| How good is the students' personal and social development?..... | 6 |
| How good are the teaching and learning? | 6 |
| How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students? | 7 |
| How well does the school protect and support students?..... | 8 |
| How good are the leadership and management of the school?..... | 8 |
| Summary of inspection judgements | 10 |
| Next Steps..... | 13 |
| How to contact us..... | 13 |

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 Edbaa Model School 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 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 Al Twar, Al Edbaa is a public school providing education for girls aged five to 14 years, Grades 1 to 9. The school followed a Ministry of Education curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 625 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. Almost all parents were very happy with the school. They agreed that their children liked school and stated that the teaching was good. They felt that their children were treated fairly and were encouraged to become independent and responsible people. Parents were happy to contact the school if they had any concerns and commented that these were dealt with quickly and effectively. They felt that their children were well cared for and that if they were having problems with school work that they would receive help. Local community links were good, but about one quarter of parents were unsure about the school's response to the recommendations from the previous report. Parents were happy about their children's progress in all their subjects. A small number of parents felt that communication from the school could be better.

How well does the school perform overall?

Al Ebdaa Model School was a good school with many outstanding features. Inspectors judged the attainment and progress in all the key subjects, except for English, to be good. The attitudes and behaviour from the youngest children to the older students was outstanding. The students were courteous, charming and polite and their desire and commitment to learning was outstanding. Throughout the school students displayed a commitment to learning and supporting their fellow students. Students had a strong awareness of their responsibilities as citizens and they showed an understanding of and a respect for Islam. The older students' economic and environmental understanding was outstanding and the younger children were able to talk about caring for their local area and showed concern for the environmental future of the United Arab Emirates and the surrounding countries.

Teaching was of a good standard, with almost two thirds judged to be good or outstanding. Teachers were hard working and committed to ensuring children made progress in their learning. Discipline and control were exercised in a responsible manner and there was an air of calm and dedication to learning throughout the school. The students were hard working and meticulous in their attention to detail in their project work and jotters. Students spoke well in both the classroom and in assembly when they described their work and used language that reflected their pride in their achievements. Procedures for assessing student work were mostly good and in some classes outstanding. In many cases teachers' marking of students' work was of a good quality supplemented with high quality oral feedback. The quality of the curriculum was good at both cycles with many examples of high quality cross curricular work which challenged and excited the students. The arrangements for the health and safety of the students were outstanding. All staff took their duty of care very seriously and health and safety policies and procedures were implemented rigorously. The building and facilities were safe, secure and maintained to a very high standard. Healthy lifestyles were promoted, sport was encouraged, and child protection procedures were well established and implemented sensitively.

The quality of leadership and management of the school was good. The Principal's leadership was outstanding. Under her leadership the senior management team had set out a clear vision for the school that ensured a strong commitment to the health, welfare and academic success of the students. The senior management team was committed to distributed leadership at all stages and the challenges this provided had been accepted by all staff. Good progress had been made in addressing the recommendations from the previous report, although some work was still required to improve the standards and quality in English.

Key features of the school

- Students' personal development, their positive attitudes, outstanding behaviour and desire to learn;
- The high quality and range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities provided for the students;
- The outstanding arrangements to ensure the health, safety and protection of students;
- Positive links with parents and the wider community;
- The contribution made by the committed and hard working teachers;
- The commitment of the Principal and her senior management team to improving the school and raising attainment.

Recommendations

- Improve progress and attainment in English;
- Continue to extend assessment arrangements to develop and further strengthen the setting of ambitious targets leading to improved attainment;
- Ensure that the learning needs of all students, particularly the high achievers, are met and that they are sufficiently challenged in lessons.

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

In Islamic Education, attainment and progress in both Cycles 1 and 2 were good. In the lower grades, most students were able to list correctly the Pillars of Islam and talk about each Pillar. They recited short chapters from The Holy Qur'an with few errors and with good application of some of the recitation rules. By the end of Cycle 1, students were able to talk about the behaviour expected of a Muslim and gave appropriate examples. Students across the school were able to make links with their lives on how to apply the concepts they were learning. In Cycle 2, students continued to recite The Holy Qur'an well and most students were able to identify the recitation rules for verses they were reading.

Students' attainment and progress in Arabic in both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 were good. In Cycle 1, students used Classical Arabic confidently in presentations and most students were able to form questions and answer them accurately. Students' reading improved from Grade 2 onwards and by the end of Cycle 1 most students were able to read unfamiliar text confidently. Across the school, students' writing was good and most students were able to write reports, summaries and short stories well. However, the quality of students' written work varied as a minority of students were complacent in their writing. Most students wrote clear, well structured paragraphs, however in the middle grades a few students struggled with their spelling. Students' application of the rules of grammar across the school was good and

most students demonstrated good grammar in their writing and speaking. In the middle grades a few students were not confident about some of the grammatical rules. Students' presentation skills in Arabic improved in Cycle 2 and most students were able to take accurate notes and rephrase information using a good range of vocabulary.

Attainment in English was acceptable in Cycle 1 and good in Cycle 2. Students' performance in examinations taken in Grades 6 to 9 was above that of other schools. Progress over time was acceptable in both cycles. By the end of the first cycle, most students could read age-appropriate stories confidently. Many had good comprehension skills and could explain the main events in stories. More able students had good inferential skills. Most responded confidently to teachers' questions. Their handwriting was well-formed and some students wrote imaginative short stories independently. In a few classes, less able students struggled with writing tasks and the school lacked the resources, such as writing frames and word banks, to help them with spelling and in forming sentences correctly. By the end of the second cycle, most students had developed a good range of vocabulary, reading and comprehension skills. Many students were able to converse fluently with peers in group tasks and to express their views clearly. Most were eager and enthusiastic in contributing to whole class discussions. Although some students were able to complete extended writing tasks, including creative writing and narratives to an acceptable level, a few found it difficult to construct accurate sentences when speaking and in their written work.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were good in both cycles. Grade 9 examination results in 2009 compared favourably with some other model schools. In Cycle 2, students developed computational and basic algebraic skills well and used them confidently, for example, to estimate and round off, solve equations, and calculate areas. They also understood and could use the proof of Pythagoras. Skills in drawing and interpreting graphs were strengths in both cycles, but a few students were not as confident when using mental calculations and negative numbers. By the end of Cycle 1, most students performed calculations and solved basic simple equations using algebra. Projects and problem-solving often included useful practical work which strengthened capacity. However, higher order and critical thinking was under-developed due to a lack of structured investigation opportunities. Nonetheless, in the basic skills, progress was good and improving.

Attainment and progress in science was good in both cycles. Most students in Cycle 1 were developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through their study of their local area and the need to care for the environment. They were able to describe and analyse differences between living and non-living things. Students understood the benefits of exercise and healthy eating. They were knowledgeable about different types of environments such as rain forests and deserts and could identify the animals that lived there. Most at Cycle 2 had achieved a good understanding of the local and global environment and their role in maintaining it. Most were developing appropriate investigative skills in class and could talk about what constituted a fair test when carrying out a science experiment. Senior students reflected upon the need to follow a healthy life style and of the dangers of drugs and smoking.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of the students throughout the school were outstanding. The students were polite, respectful and courteous at all times to the teaching staff, ancillary staff and guests in the school. They were respectful and helpful to other students and the older girls felt a sense of duty to care for the younger girls in the school. Students displayed mature behaviour and were supportive of each other. Students' attendance was excellent and they were punctual at the start of the day and at the start of each lesson.

Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were also outstanding. The students had an excellent understanding and appreciation of the history of Dubai. They were able to talk about a range of changes that had taken place in Dubai and the impact that these had had on the country. The students were confident in discussing some of the projects and initiatives that were currently taking place in Dubai and the way in which these initiatives would benefit people living in Dubai. Students had an excellent understanding of Islam's impact on Dubai and the expatriate community that lived in Dubai. They were able to talk confidently about the positive and negative aspects of the nature of Dubai's multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. They were able to compare Dubai and other cosmopolitan cities and draw mature conclusions as to why Dubai had developed so much in such a short time. The students sang the national anthem with pride in the morning assemblies.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was also outstanding. Students were able to talk confidently about the global financial crisis. The school grounds were immaculately clean and classrooms were clean and tidy at all times, with good displays of students' work around the school. This was especially the case in the Cycle 1 block. Students' demonstrated a good understanding of the need to protect the environment and had a good understanding of the ways in which they could contribute to protecting natural resources. They were clear about what roles they would like to take in society and how they would contribute to the future of Dubai.

How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching for effective learning was good across the school. Teachers were committed and had good knowledge of their subjects. Teachers praised students and encouraged them to learn. Lessons were planned and structured well, teachers explained, modelled and presented their lessons clearly. Available resources were often used well and teachers produced additional worksheets that catered for all abilities. In the best lessons, teachers' skilled questioning, interactions and range of different activities engaged and challenged students. The enriching use of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment motivated students. When teaching was less effective, expectations were often too low and the pace of lessons was too slow with over-direction from the teacher. In such lessons whole-class teaching and questioning was dominant and the use of the established groups was very limited. Strategies

to meet the different learning needs and abilities of some students, particularly those capable of high achievement, were not used consistently across the school.

The quality of learning across the school was good. Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons were excellent. They were enthusiastic and confident and, when given the opportunity, students were able to show independence and take responsibility for their own learning. They were invariably very keen to answer questions, contribute to lessons and share their ideas, and, responded well to challenge. Students carried out practical and experimental work well, engaged in high quality discussions, interacted and co-operated very well with each other. However, when teachers did not provide an effective range of strategies, learning and progress was limited. On occasions, when some students were passive learners and when lessons were over-directed by teachers, the students did not achieve their full potential.

Assessment across the school was good. Teachers knew their students' strengths and weaknesses very well and provided regular on-going oral and positive written feedback. However, staff often would only use a few written comments to help students improve. Regular class tests generated data which were beginning to be used to inform curriculum planning to target worksheets for individuals' learning needs. A strong feature of assessment was students' completion of daily evaluation forms and end of module evaluation plans. As a result of this, systematic and targeted action was put in place when students identified difficulties. A very comprehensive student file was also maintained for each student which monitored and tracked their attainment and progress, and teachers were beginning to set targets for each student in each key subject. However, not all teachers were using this new system. Formal and systematic target-setting to improve students' progress was not yet fully embedded in the school. There were some inconsistencies in how a few teachers assessed students' learning.

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

The quality of the curriculum was good in both cycles. It was based on the Ministry of Education guidance and offered appropriate breadth and balance. The curriculum was enriched by additional resources used by teachers to supplement textbook-based tasks and creative teaching and learning activities across subjects. Cross-curricular links were made between subjects for project-based work such as in science, although there was insufficient challenge planned for more able students. The provision for health education through subjects and workshops planned by the nurse and social worker was good. Extra-curricular sports and other activities, such as fund-raising for local charities made a strong contribution to students' personal and social development. Procedures to review the curriculum twice yearly had been established and had led to improvements in provision whereby students could evaluate their learning. It was too early to judge the impact of these initiatives. The school had made a broad range of provision for more able students, including additional lessons on cross-curricular topics, project-work and inter-school and international competitions. However, there was

insufficient challenge for higher achieving students in learning activities in many classes. There was scope to further develop the curriculum to meet the full range of needs.

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 in and around the school. Supervision of students on school transport and during breaks was managed very well. Fire safety drills were carried out in line with regulations. The premises were clean and well maintained. Resources such as the mathematics playground and school farm were used effectively to enrich learning. Medical information was updated and kept securely. Risk assessments were carried out for practical subjects and for school trips. Healthy lifestyles were promoted very well through curriculum subjects, workshops by the nurse and social worker and extra-curricular sporting activities. The child protection policy was implemented effectively and staff were aware of the arrangements.

Relationships between staff and students were very good. Teachers knew their students well and created a positive ethos for learning. Teachers managed behaviour effectively and lessons ran smoothly. The nurse and social worker worked closely with parents to provide good quality support and guidance for students' social and emotional needs. There was acceptable provision made for guidance for future careers. These could be improved by a more structured approach to preparing students for careers interviews. Attendance and punctuality were monitored rigorously. Procedures for tracking academic progress recently been established but had not been fully implemented to set individual learning targets for students across all curriculum subjects.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Led by an excellent Principal, the school had good leadership and management capacity. The Principal had a clear and explicit vision for the school and had succeeded in ensuring that all staff were united in their efforts to provide the students with the highest quality education. The Principal and her Vice-Principals knew the staff and students very well. Systematic action was taken for those students who were identified as underachieving, involving the parents as necessary. This contributed to the good results achieved by students in the Ministry of Education tests. The senior leadership team created additional opportunities for students to take on responsibility and to develop leadership qualities. Older students said how much they had learned through these experiences, whilst younger students said how much they looked forward to the time when they could be involved in these experiences.

Self-evaluation was good. The school consulted widely on its effectiveness involving teachers, students and parents. The Principal had involved her Vice-Principals and curriculum leaders in evaluating the teaching in both Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 classes. This was systematically organised through lesson observations, checks of the work that students had completed and discussions with students and teachers. This had resulted in improvements in

teaching and student attainment. Co-ordinators for subjects facilitated communication between the Principal and the subject teachers. Most provided helpful and valued guidance and advice to teachers. The school development plan was based on a thorough review of the school's strengths and development needs and provided clear guidance to staff on what was needed to be done to bring about improvements in student attainment and in the quality of teaching and learning.

Links with parents were outstanding. Parents' opinions were regularly sought and analysed through surveys on a range of school matters. There were many opportunities for parents to meet staff to discuss their child's progress. A number of parents had volunteered to help the school through a parents' committee. As part of the response to the previous inspection the school had recently set up a website to improve communication with parents. This initiative was aimed to ensure that all parents would be better informed about the life and work of the school.

A governance advisory body had recently been formed but had not yet had an impact on the school. This group would involve a number of stake holders from the school community.

Facilities and resources were good. For example, students benefited from their involvement in the school farm where they grew fruit and vegetables which they sold locally. The outside teaching areas allowed students to learn in a relaxed environment, but the organisation of student work stations within the Cycle 2 computer room was poor. Students had access to only a limited range of resources and this affected their learning experiences, especially within the science laboratories. Staffing was good. Teachers were sufficient in number and appropriately qualified.

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: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Attainment | Good | Good |
| Progress over time | Good | Good |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic? | | |
|---|---------|---------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Attainment | Good | Good |
| Progress over time | Good | Good |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in English? | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Attainment | Acceptable | Good |
| Progress over time | Acceptable | Acceptable |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics? | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Attainment | Good | Good |
| Progress over time | Good | Good |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in science? | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Attainment | Good | Good |
| Progress over time | Good | Good |

| How good is the students' personal and social development? | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Attitudes and behaviour | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Islamic, cultural and civic understanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Economic and environmental understanding | Outstanding | Outstanding |

| How good are teaching and learning? | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Teaching for effective learning | Good | Good |
| Quality of students' learning | Good | Good |
| Assessment | Good | Good |

| How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students? | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Curriculum quality | Good | Good |

| How well does the school protect and support students? | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| Age group: | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 |
| Health and safety | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Quality of support | Good | 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 | Outstanding |
| 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.

Copyright 2010

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.