

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Jumeirah English Speaking School (Br)

Report published in April 2014

## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Jumeirah English Speaking School (Br)

Location	Arabian Ranches
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jess.sch.ae
Telephone	04 3619019
Address	P.O. Box 24942, Dubai
Principal	Robert David Stokoe
Curriculum	UK/IB
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Year Groups	3-18 / Foundation Stage 1 - Year 13
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1378
Largest nationality group of Students	UK
Number of Emirati students	14 (1%)
Date of the inspection	21st to 24th October 2013

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## The context of the school

Jumeirah English Speaking School, Arabian Ranches, is linked to its sister school Jumeirah English Speaking School in Al Safa. Both schools had the same Director of Education and Board of Governors. The Director was aided by two headteachers, separately responsible for the primary and secondary phases, and seven assistant headteachers, including one who oversaw the Foundation Stage. The school followed the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, followed by the English National Curriculum to the end of Key Stage 4, when students took General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. Students at the post-16 stage followed the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The IB Career Certificate had been introduced prior to the current session. More than half of the students were of UK background. The other students came from more than 20 countries across the world. Around one per cent of the students were Emiratis. The school had identified around five per cent of students who had special educational needs. These students were supported in classes and in a learning support centre called The Oasis.

## Overall school performance 2013-2014

### Outstanding

#### Key strengths

- Dynamic and innovative leadership at all levels:
  - from the Director, who gave a strong, strategic and visionary lead, ably supported by highly effective headteachers of the secondary and primary departments and by assistant headteachers;
  - from staff, who responded well to opportunities to show leadership in a wide range of tasks and activities and were committed to professional development; and
  - from the students themselves, who benefited from numerous and varied opportunities to lead learning.
- Frequent, regular and imaginative reviews of the curriculum and improvements to it, which was innovative and which met the needs of all groups of students very well.
- Outstanding attainment in many aspects of students' work, including their well-developed personal, social and learning skills.
- The school's arrangements for keeping students and Foundation Stage children safe, healthy and supported.
- The very attractive and well maintained learning environment.

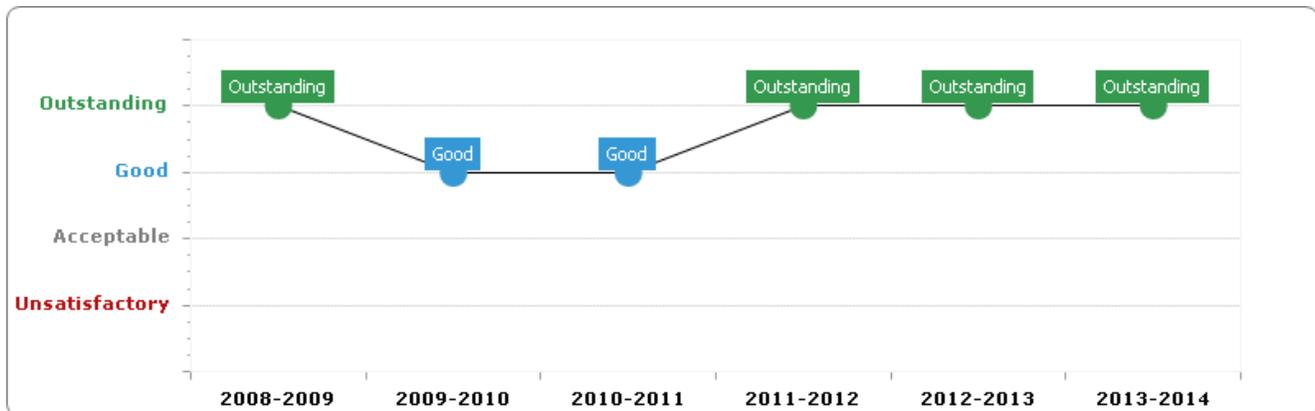
#### Recommendations

- Ensure that the quality of teaching in Islamic Education and in Arabic as a first language is more consistently of good or better quality.
- The school should continue its efforts to increase the proportion of lessons which are of outstanding quality, from an already high level.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Staff had maintained high standards, and many excellent aspects had been improved further. For example, the outstanding curriculum had been enhanced by several changes designed to meet the needs of certain groups of students more effectively.
- Under the direction of senior leaders, the curriculum in Arabic had been updated. Teaching staff were making progress in improving their approaches. These developments were appropriate, and Arabic provision was heading in the right direction. The developments had not yet had enough impact to change students' attainment and progress significantly.
- As part of the school's overall commitment to continually improving learning transitions, staff had improved their tracking of students' progress in non-key subjects, particularly in physical education, to enhance their transition between the primary and secondary phases.
- The school had employed a part-time careers officer who had worked, with success, to strengthen careers guidance for students and support them with university admission procedures.

## Trend of overall performance



## How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Quality of students' learning skills</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Outstanding
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment was almost all outstanding in English, mathematics and science. It was good in mathematics in the post-16 phase. Attainment was mostly acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic except in the primary phase, where attainment was mostly good. Most students in primary and lower secondary could explain well the pillars of Islam and Faith. Most students were not confident enough in recitation and memorisation of the Holy Qur'an. In Arabic as a first language, most students had good listening skills, although other skills were less well developed. In Arabic as an additional language, students' writing and speaking were not as good as their other skills. In English, by the end of the Foundation Stage, children could write sentences using capital letters and full stops. In other phases, students were able to apply their well-developed language skills when thinking critically in lessons. In mathematics, Foundation Stage children were very good at adding numbers and recognising numerals. In other phases, students were strong in calculations and problem solving. In science, children at Foundation Stage had an age-appropriate knowledge of the human body. Students in all other phases had very good skills in practical, scientific investigations.

Progress followed a broadly similar pattern to attainment in the key subjects across phases. Progress in Islamic Education was better in primary than in other phases. Progress in memorisation and recitation was below expectations. In Arabic as a first language, students did not make good progress in speaking and reading, although their vocabulary repertoire was developing well. In Arabic as an additional language, students in primary and secondary progressed well as a result of effective teaching strategies. In English, students' outstanding progress in listening and talking enabled them to enrich their achievement in other aspects of English. In the Foundation Stage, for example, children made excellent progress in composing well-punctuated sentences using mature vocabulary. Senior students made progress by supporting and challenging each other's thinking about complex texts. Mathematics teachers promoted independent and collaborative learning, thus developing students' positive attitude towards mathematics and helping them to make rapid progress. Children in the Foundation Stage made rapid progress in counting. Science tasks using stimulating resources encouraged children's interest in simple science investigations in the Foundation Stage. This set the stage for rapid progress into primary and through to the other phases.

[View judgements](#)

## Quality of students' learning skills

Students' learning skills were outstanding across the school. Foundation Stage children and students in other phases showed very positive attitudes towards their learning. They were able to place their learning in context with different subjects and with the world around them. They showed critical thinking and problem-solving skills in almost all classes. Students could think creatively and skilfully analyse their work and the work of their peers. Across the phases and subjects, students were learning how to learn. They showed

resilience in facing high levels of challenge to solve problems through interaction and collaboration. They could also apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to new learning contexts and make connections with other subjects. The highly effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) enthused students to carry out research and to reflect on and assess their own learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

Students' personal and social development was outstanding. Children in the Foundation Stage showed mature approaches to their learning. Students' relationships with their peers and with teachers were very respectful and positive. Behaviour in lessons and around school was exemplary. Students were mature and thoughtful. They responded very well to the wide range of opportunities to take responsibility and to lead learning activities. Students were able to make wise choices to have a healthy lifestyle, for example by participating in sport and eating sensibly. Attendance levels, including in Foundation Stage, were high and were outstanding overall. Students demonstrated excellent understanding of Islamic values and the influence of these values on contemporary society in Dubai. Children in the Foundation Stage also had a better than expected understanding of these issues for their age. Students showed great respect for, and understanding of the heritage of the UAE. They knew about and respected many other cultures. Students cared for their school and were pro-active in community projects and in activities related to sustainability and conservation. Staff actively promoted and modelled a strong work ethic, and students responded very well.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are teaching and assessment?

The quality of teaching across the school was outstanding. In lessons, most teachers carefully balanced the advancement of students' knowledge and understanding with a clear focus on developing their skills as learners. They planned thoroughly to meet students' learning needs and link learning to real life. In all phases, tasks and activities regularly posed suitably high levels of challenge and progressively required students to make choices and think creatively and analytically. For example, children in the Foundation Stage benefitted from opportunities to choose activities such as designing three-dimensional maps. By the post-16 phase, teachers set high expectations of intellectual rigour in students' debates and discussions. Many lessons were presented with flair and imagination in a way that inspired and excited children and students. The best lessons often featured creative use of ICT by teachers and by students. Teachers regularly illuminated learning by powerful questioning that stimulated students' thinking. In the very best lessons, such questions were posed as much by students as by teachers, in a growing partnership for learning. The

quality of teaching in subjects other than the key ones was generally outstanding, with vibrant examples of highly effective teaching, particularly in humanities.

Assessment was outstanding in all phases. From the Foundation Stage to post-16, comprehensive assessment arrangements enabled staff to monitor closely all aspects of students' progress and attainment. Staff at all levels used assessment findings to make carefully considered and timely improvements to courses, programmes and lessons. As a result, students in all phases, including those with special educational needs, were very well supported and suitably challenged across almost all areas of their learning. In lessons, most teachers used questioning skilfully to evaluate students' performance. Students in many lessons were adept in evaluating their own learning. In class, teachers generally linked praise very specifically to performance. Helpful oral advice and written comments focused on what students could do to improve their learning. Senior staff rigorously analysed students' attainment in standardised assessment and external examinations, to ensure that students' outcomes continued to compare very favourably against international standards.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum and its design to meet the learning needs of all groups of students were outstanding. Senior leaders had developed a clear rationale for the curriculum, which was well balanced and systematically planned to promote continuity and progression in students' attainment from the Foundation Stage to post-16. The curriculum was reviewed in a culture of uncompromising self-evaluation and ongoing improvement. Cross-curricular links, and references to real life applications, were positive features. Enrichment activities enhanced students' learning significantly. Staff modified the curriculum in imaginative ways and to meet the needs of different groups of students. Curriculum options provided excellent opportunities for students to develop their talents and interests to the full.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school's health and safety systems were outstanding. Staff showed a strong commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles, and the Foundation Stage children and students in other phases responded well. The campus was secure and very well maintained. Safety aspects were given appropriate attention. The flow of school traffic was well controlled, and buses were effectively supervised. Medical staff made a significant

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contribution to promoting and monitoring students' health and welfare. Records were kept in good order. All staff and students knew what to do if they had a concern for a student's well-being.

The quality of support was outstanding. Relationships between staff and students were excellent, creating a purposeful and challenging learning environment. A well-thought out and consistent approach to all students ensured excellent behaviour at all times. Staff members had extremely good knowledge of their students' personal strengths and weaknesses. Experienced and knowledgeable professionals provided excellent levels of support for students with special needs, both in the classroom and Oasis Rooms. Skilled additional teaching was offered by specialists who worked alongside students in lessons. This strong support enabled students to make excellent progress overall. Students were able to seek advice and support on academic or personal issues from a wide range of trusted adults. Students felt confident that their concerns would be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner. Advice on careers and university entrance was readily available. The recording of attendance and punctuality was accurate and parents were contacted immediately if a student failed to appear in school.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of leadership and management was outstanding in all key aspects. The Director gave strong and imaginative leadership and was ably supported in this by the Headteachers and Assistant Headteachers. Many other staff, including heads of department, responded well to opportunities to show leadership in particular projects or aspects of the school's work. Teamwork was well developed. Through clear communication and professional relationships, senior staff successfully encouraged teachers to set high expectations of students' attainment and progress.

Staff employed a wide range of approaches to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. They systematically analysed the data and information gathered and, as a result, had a comprehensive and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Plans for improvement were appropriate and were implemented well. While many aspects of the school's work were of outstanding quality, senior leaders did not allow any complacency to develop, and successfully encouraged staff to strive for improvement at all times. The school had a collegiate approach to evaluating the quality of teaching, which helped teachers to self-evaluate and develop their teaching skills.

Staff employed a wide range of methods for gathering the views of parents. Parents were on the Governing Board and the parents' group, and had opportunities to attend regular year-group meetings. Parents had opportunities to help in learning activities in the school and to support the school in fund-raising and other

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activities. Communication to parents was done in a range of ways and was appreciated by parents. Arrangements for reporting to parents on their children's progress were of high quality. Links with the local and wider community, including other schools, were strong and enhanced students' learning.

The governors brought a wide range of experience and expertise to their roles, which they discharged in a highly effective manner. They supported the school and exercised accountability in equal measure. Teamwork with senior staff was extensive and, as a result, the board exerted a positive strategic influence on the school.

The school was well staffed, with extensive resources for teaching and learning. Accommodation was of excellent quality. A new block containing sixth-form common room, lecture theatre, canteen and other facilities was scheduled to open within a matter of weeks. The campus was very well maintained.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Across all stages, Emirati students were integrated and engaged in the work of the school. Their attainment in the key subjects was good. They met the learning outcomes and produced work of a good standard that was in line with the work of most of their peers. In Arabic and Islamic Education, most students attained at expected levels. In English, a few were working below expectations in writing. Emirati students made good progress within a supportive learning environment. They showed positive attitudes towards their learning and behaved well in and out of class. They contributed to class work and discussions, and were effectively engaged in lessons and projects. The school had clear and robust assessment procedures to track the students' attainment and progress, and parents were regularly informed. The curriculum met their academic and personal and social needs and, alongside the rich learning environment, helped the students to preserve their local cultural and traditional attributes. Regular communication with the home via various systems was established and parents were real partners of the school in supporting their children's education.

## How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

Progress for students with special educational needs throughout the school was outstanding in Islamic Education, English, mathematics and science. In Arabic, progress was good. Individual education plans were

available for relevant staff to identify students' overall needs. These did not always indicate suitably graded and achievable learning steps. The school recognised and provided for its gifted students. Parents were involved at all stages through the referral system. Regular meetings were arranged between the school and parents to discuss their child's progress. Some parents were training to scribe for students during tests. In lessons, there was some differentiation in the planning. However, the individual needs of students were often attended to through skilled support staff or informed teachers. In addition, some students were taught in smaller sets. Others were withdrawn for specific, focused sessions. Progress was monitored termly through tests in all key subjects. This information was analysed, but the school recognised the need to set more detailed learning targets.

The school had an effective admissions policy and a special needs policy that ensured all students who were able to access a curriculum taught in English were accepted. Wheelchair access was limited. The detailed special needs policy was comprehensive and implemented well. Guidelines for parents were very clear. Leaders had excellent knowledge and expertise, and had recently put new systems in place. Teachers in Key Stages 3 and 4 had recently received relevant training. The curriculum was modified, especially in the secondary school, to ensure students were able to successfully sit important external examinations.

## How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

Across the phases, the quality of teaching Arabic as a first language had generally improved in most of its aspects since last inspection. Teachers gave sufficient opportunities for students to work independently and with others. Lessons were mostly devised with clear objectives and steps to follow. They included a variety of activities which were aimed at integrating the four skills of the language. Teachers' good subject knowledge enabled students to be exposed to correct target language, although at times they reverted to English for two-way communication. The teachers used good probing questions that generated discussion and stretched students' thinking. The pace of most lessons was suitable to the age and stage of the students. The use of ICT by both the teachers and the students helped the students to progress well in the lessons. However, differentiation was based mainly on different worksheets rather than catering to different needs. Planning work for students with different learning targets was not always effective and the work given did not always offer good opportunity for progression.

The curriculum for Arabic as a first language was consistent across all phases. It was based on Ministry of Education expectations and the teachers usually modified it appropriately to take into account the students' needs and their expected next stages of learning. Although it generally gave students sufficient opportunities

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to progress well in most aspects of their learning, speaking and independent writing skills were underdeveloped.

## What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	225	25%
	Last year	316	33%
Teachers	38		28%
Students	0		0%

\*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Only a small minority of parents and teachers completed the survey, a drop from the previous year. Almost all parents who responded were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. They thought that the school had good leadership, kept their children safe, and offered a wide curriculum with interesting topics. Almost all felt that their children enjoyed school, had good opportunities to use technology in their learning, and benefited from teachers' feedback on their progress. High proportions thought that their children were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. Views on progress in Islamic Education and Arabic were less positive. Around half were aware of the school's results in international benchmark projects such as TIMSS and PIRLS. All of the small number of teachers who responded felt that they were involved in curriculum review. No students responded to the survey.

## What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

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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