

The Elite English School Inspection Report

Pre-Primary to Secondary

Report issued February 2011

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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 Elite English School was inspected in October 2010 as part of the regular inspection of all schools in Dubai. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated students' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on students' progress in Islamic Education (for Muslim students), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Deira, The Elite English School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from pre-primary to secondary, aged four to 16 years. The school follows an Indian (CBSE) curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 690 students on roll. Student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents. Almost all parents were satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. Most parents were of the view that their children progressed well in Islamic Education. Most parents also felt their child made good or better progress in English, science and mathematics. Most parents felt the quality of teaching at the school was good or better and a similar number said their children enjoyed the lessons. The majority of parents felt the extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school were good or excellent. However, the majority of parents felt their children required a lot of help at home with their study.

How well does the school perform overall?

The Elite English School provided a good quality of education with a number of significant strengths. The school had responded well to the recommendations from the last inspection report. The school had improved its quality of teaching within the curriculum. The school middle leaders now provided regular and more detailed information to the school Principal. The school demonstrated a good capacity for further improvement.

Attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science were good across the primary and secondary phases of the school. Attainment and progress were acceptable in these subjects in the Kindergarten and across the school in Islamic Education and Arabic. The quality of teaching was acceptable in these areas and was good in English, mathematics and science in the primary and secondary stages. Students demonstrated excellent attitudes and behaviour and they were supported by well-developed and effective systems to ensure safety and care. The school leaders managed the school effectively and demonstrated a clear vision for developing both a caring ethos and on-going improvements.

Key features of the school

- The inclusive nature of the school was a very positive and important strength;
- Teaching in the Kindergarten stage was less effective than that observed in other phases of the school;
- The school offered a wide range of curriculum opportunities including extra-curricular activities;
- There was a good level of student involvement in the functioning of the school;
- The overall levels of support for students were outstanding;
- The outstanding attitudes and behaviour of primary and secondary students provided a productive climate for learning both in and out of the classroom;
- The level of information and communications technology (ICT) resources was limited;
- There was a strong and effective partnership with parents.

Recommendations

- Raise standards of attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Share the effective good practice that some teachers demonstrated to bring about a more consistent quality of teaching across the school, particularly in the Kindergarten stage;
- Improve the analysis and use of assessment data to better meet students' individual needs;
- Further develop the levels of ICT equipment in classrooms.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were acceptable throughout school. In the primary, most students' Qur'an recitation skills were in line with expectations. They knew that The Holy Qur'an was the source of legislation in Islam. They were able to quote correctly from The Holy Qur'an. In Grade 4, students knew the five pillars of Islam and the six pillars of the Iman along with the conditions of prayer. Most students knew the importance of meeting the time requirements of Islamic worship. Students also knew the different types of prayer such as the voluntary prayers. They understood the significance of the congregational prayer in an Islamic society. They were aware of what to do if they missed any prayer.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were acceptable throughout the school. Most students were able to apply the pronunciation rules in context. They could also form words and write some simple sentences without spelling mistakes. In Grade 1 almost all students had memorised the alphabet and could read letters, words and sentences. Almost all students in Grade 3 were able to copy their teacher's writing. They read and wrote many sentences demonstrating the accurate application of grammatical rules such tenses and the singular and plural forms. In the secondary phase most students knew the antonyms and synonyms of various words. They were able to read medium-size texts correctly and made a variety of responses to stories and poems.

Attainment and progress in English was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the primary and secondary grades, reaching above average standards by Grade 10. Students could use language competently, with the highest levels of attainment demonstrated in speaking. They were very articulate and could express personal feelings and opinions using wide-ranging vocabulary and complex sentences. They could present an argument, supporting it with appropriate examples. For example, Grade 4 students could discuss, in depth, the importance of trees and also extend their discussion to include the abstract thought of the feelings of trees. Students could read for a range of different purposes. Students' progress in literary analysis and writing in Grades 9 and 10 was particularly good. Their sentences were clear and well-connected. They were able to write for different purposes but were less secure in writing in different genres.

The attainment of students in mathematics was good across the school. Progress was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the rest of the school, particularly in the lower primary classes. In the Kindergarten classes students were able to read, write, count, compare and order numbers from 1 to 20 and could recognise different shapes and name them. They could add and subtract using objects. Students in the primary grades were able to do the four operations of number with single, double and multiple digits in line with expected levels of attainment. Students in Grade 6 and above were able to estimate, measure, label and compare perimeters and areas. They could work out numerical problems based on fractions, decimals

and percentages. The skill of applying this knowledge to real life contexts was a little more limited. Grade 10 students' results in the CBSE board examination over the last three years indicated that their attainment and progress were good, overall.

Students' attainment and progress in science was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the rest of the school. Kindergarten children demonstrated good factual knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts. For example, most children could identify and recognise fruits and vegetables and, by the end of Kindergarten 2, children could differentiate between healthy and junk food. In the primary grades students could describe the functions of different parts of plants and were able to use scientific terminology such as 'roots', 'absorb' and 'water'. In physics students understood the uses of light in daily life and in chemistry they were introduced to the first steps in writing chemical formulae, showing a good understanding of symbols and valence. Students' understanding of the theoretical nature of science was stronger than their abilities to apply those ideas and to experiment. Outcomes for students in national examinations were above average.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of students were good in the Kindergarten and outstanding in the rest of the school. Students shared an excellent rapport with their teachers, leading to a productive learning community. Although the student body was composed of a large cross-section of nationalities and students with special educational needs, relationships were positive between peers. Students showed their care and concern for those in need by visiting the Baraha hospital and Sonapur labour camp to distribute food supplies. They had proactive attitudes to healthy living and carried healthy snacks to school. They enjoyed participating in aerobics and karate for their fitness regime, in addition to Physical Education. Attendance for the current academic year was good; however it was unsatisfactory during the inspection period. Punctuality levels were outstanding.

Students' understanding of their civic responsibilities was good. They were fully involved in school procedures and took on leadership roles successfully. Assemblies were regularly student-led with varied themes such as healthy living and UAE culture. Students showed a good understanding of Islamic principles, as evident from assembly activities and competitions.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was good. Students were clear in their goals for the future and envisioned settling in Dubai. They had clear ideas of their potential contribution to Dubai's progress and showed confidence in Dubai's future. Younger students said that Dubai could be made better by planting more trees, caring for the environment and reducing pollution. They had great pride in the visionary leaders of Dubai and their role in Dubai's achievements. Students spoke of campaigns and projects undertaken to support and sustain the environment in and outside the school. They appreciated facilities provided by the school that helped them develop economic and environmental understanding.

How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching for effective learning was acceptable at the Kindergarten phase and good in the rest of the school. The better teaching featured in the primary phase and in some secondary grades. In most of the good lessons teachers ensured students' recalled previous knowledge. They demonstrated good use of motivational questioning and maintained a good pace of learning. They made good use of resources and concluded their lessons with some good home assignments. These challenged the students' new learning, requiring the application of what they had learnt to a different context. In such lessons teachers used good probing questioning techniques. The teaching of children with special educational needs was outstanding. Each teacher was well aware of the individual needs of these children in the group and helped them to do work appropriate to their learning needs. It helped them to learn individual skills in a group situation. Teaching in music and dance classes was also good, providing students with ample opportunities to build upon their natural talents.

The quality of learning was good in the primary and upper parts of the school and acceptable in the early years. The best learning happened when students took responsibility for their learning and were well-engaged and attentive in their lessons. Students exhibited age-related knowledge and skills and were able to answer most of the teachers' questions. In science lessons students learnt through observation and research methods and were able to relate theory to practical elements. Reading, listening and speaking skills in English were good and students were highly motivated to use these skills in every-day situations. In the less successful lessons the activities planned were too simple to maintain the attention of students.

Examinations and on-going assessments were a regular feature of the school's assessment procedures which were acceptable overall. The school provided students and their parents with timely feedback on their holistic development but did not use the information collected through these assessments consistently to give students short-term feedback. Students had little involvement in their own or peer assessment.

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

The curriculum was of a good quality and met most students' needs well. Programmes were regularly reviewed and adapted to meet changing needs and circumstances. There was a clear rationale for the way in which it was planned which ensured that all prescribed areas were covered to a sufficient depth. The curriculum offered a wide range of choice for a second language. The curriculum provided good opportunities to develop important cross-curricular links through, for example, the discussion of parliament while teaching Julius Caesar in English. A particularly strong feature was the opportunities provided for children to learn from their local environment and community, including the planting of trees, reducing the use of plastic, a trip to the Marmum factory, a visit to Bahara hospital and the recycling of newspapers, cans and electronic items. The Kindergarten curriculum was well suited to children's needs and encouraged learning through play. The primary school curriculum had an appropriate breadth

and balance across all elements and was regularly adapted to help to meet the needs of students. Effective planning supported the continuity of students' learning between the Kindergarten and primary classes, and similarly between primary and secondary phases. The curricular programme for students with special educational needs successfully promoted their progress; each student had an individual learning plan, which was tailored to their needs and regularly reviewed. An additional strength of the curriculum was the rich and diverse co-curricular programme which extended and complemented the main curriculum by covering cultural events, creative arts, physical education, an environmental club, drama and an embroidery club. For Grades 9 and 10 the curriculum was clearly defined by the requirements of the examination board. It provided an appropriate level of challenge to students in preparing them for examinations.

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school's arrangements for protecting students were good with teachers, supervisors and the Principal working closely together to give students a high level of care and attention. Safety measures were secure, including the monitoring of students' arrivals and departures. Good medical facilities, including first-aid were provided. The school's infirmary was well equipped and the follow-up of sick or injured students was done on a short-term as well as long-term basis by the doctor. Regular fire drills were carried out with students and teachers well aware of the procedures involved. The school building and facilities including transport were safe, secure and suitably maintained. The school promoted healthy lifestyles well through the many activities like assemblies, the life-style club, annual health meetings, school displays and during sports sessions. Students with special educational needs had been clearly identified and were being provided with good support in relation to their needs. Students with special needs were provided with specialist professional services and well-equipped classrooms. The school had adopted a proactive approach to preventing problems before they arose. The staff were highly vigilant in matters of child protection and were all aware of the school's policy.

The quality of support offered to students was outstanding. Students were enthused by the quality of the relationships with staff and praised the access they had to key staff and the help and advice they offered. Overall, levels of behaviour in the school were outstanding and the staff, often through the counselling of students, dealt with any issues promptly. There were high levels of mutual respect between staff, students and parents. Regular assessment procedures took place each term. As a result, staff were very aware of students' progress in subjects and made contact with parents if issues needed addressing. Staff-parent consultations were regular and their quality was well regarded by the parents. In particular the school had placed a high emphasis on helping those students who had special educational needs. Consultations in those cases were comprehensive and parents met staff on an extended one-to-one basis to discuss the individual needs of their children in depth. These students were encouraged to take a full part in the school's life, including performing at assemblies. Absence issues were well monitored by staff and students understood the procedures if they arrived late to the school.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership and management were good. The Principal had a very clear vision concerning the experiences children had during their time at the school. The senior and middle managers shared this caring ethos. Senior staff were focused on continually improving the standards of teaching and learning but their ability to engage in monitoring of lessons varied due to their work-load. The Principal, senior management and governing body were open to consultation and suggestions from all stakeholders and monthly staff discussion groups fed back to the Principal. Consequently, teachers at all levels felt able to contribute to, and to influence, decision-making and knew their views were valued. There were effective performance management procedures in place with teachers being observed by managers when other time commitments allowed. Courses and seminars were regularly accessed. These arose from the appraisal process and addressed the professional needs of staff.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The school had a clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses. Following the last inspection, the school highlighted the recommendations as priorities. Positive improvement was noted in several aspects, including a more varied approach to teaching with more evidence of collaborative learning. The subject leaders' role in self-evaluation has improved. The views of parents, staff and students were continually sought on all areas of school life. The school had successfully planned for and introduced significant changes in provision for students with special educational needs.

The partnership with parents and the community were outstanding. Parents expressed a strong appreciation of the school's work and felt there was a positive ethos within the school. They were made to feel welcome in the school. Parents stated that reports on their children's progress and attainment were both regular and informative. Parents were made to feel involved in their children's work in school through regular parents' meetings. The school had a range of links with the community including involvement in inter-school competitions, environmental projects, tree planting, visits to hospitals and distributing food to the nearby labour camp.

The governance of the school was good. The small governing body consisted of a representative of parents, teachers and administrative staff. They were seen as a potential conduit for staff suggestions as they were also the key subject leaders. They discussed the key issues of the school and liaised with the parent council board and discussed topics raised by this body regularly. Future strategic plans included upgrading the science laboratories and raising the school age profile to include Grade 11 students.

The staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. The school has coped well with a high turnover of staff in recent months. 15 new members of staff had joined the school since September 2010. The majority of staff were well-qualified and were well deployed. The buildings were clean and safe and provided appropriate accommodation. In particular there were five rooms devoted to the students with special educational needs. These rooms contained good resources and were served by a visiting speech therapist. A science laboratory was being refurbished during the inspection. The level of ICT equipment availability was just acceptable with a computer laboratory containing 18 machines. However, computer availability in classrooms and the use of whiteboard technology was low. There were no assistants in the Kindergarten stage and approaches to teaching and learning were consequently limited at times.

Summary of inspection judgements

In their evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the school, the inspection team made judgements about the following aspects of the school's performance.

Four descriptors are: Outstanding; Good; Acceptable; Unsatisfactory.

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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