

# Crescent English School Inspection Report

Kindergarten to Grade 12

Report issued January 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 Crescent English 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, and 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 Ghusais, Crescent English School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12. The school follows both the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Tamil State curriculum. Arabic is taught in the school as an additional language. The school had experienced a high teacher turnover during the past year. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,246 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents stated overwhelmingly that their child liked school. The majority of parents believed that their child was making good progress in both Islamic Education and Arabic but a few were concerned about their child's attainment in Arabic. Most said their child was making good progress in mathematics and science and almost all thought their child was making good progress in English. Parents were very satisfied with the standard of behaviour in the school and almost all thought their child worked hard at school and was treated fairly. They also thought that there was a good range of activities, which their child found enjoyable and stimulating. Most thought that teaching was good and that their child was learning to be both independent and responsible. Although most parents thought that teachers explained how they could help their child at home with schoolwork, a minority disagreed. Most parents were very pleased with the information they received about their child's progress and they thought teachers showed care and concern for their child's welfare. Almost all felt comfortable about approaching the school with a problem or concern, being confident that the school

would do something about it. A majority of parents thought the school was well led. At the parents' meeting all of the parents requested that the school help students develop confidence in public speaking through being allowed to express and discuss their ideas.

## How well does the school perform overall?

The Crescent English School provided an acceptable quality of education, with some good features. Inspectors judged the overall attainment and progress in mathematics to be good and to be acceptable in Arabic, Islamic Education, English and science. In each of these latter subjects, students were making acceptable gains in their knowledge skills and understanding but insufficient provision was made for them to apply their knowledge in real contexts. All students who participated in the examinations conducted by the Science India Forum passed and some achieved very commendable results. All students achieved the pass mark in last year's Grade 10 Tamil State examination and overall results compared favourably with the state averages. Students throughout the school were polite and well behaved and they moved around the school in an orderly manner. Students demonstrated acceptable knowledge of their responsibilities as citizens and, overall, acceptable understanding of the principles of Islam and respect for its values. Students' economic and environmental understanding was good. They were able to talk knowledgeably, for example, about the key factors that had affected the success of Dubai and to give thoughtful suggestions for reducing global warming.

In most lessons, teaching was acceptable or good but the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was too high; this was largely because the teaching resulted in passive student participation and students had too few opportunities to express their ideas using their experience, knowledge and imagination. The curriculum was of acceptable quality. In the KG grades, a good range of learning activities enabled the children to deepen their learning and understanding and to promote their social and personal development. Elsewhere in the school, the curriculum adhered closely to the CBSE and Tamil Board content requirements and students had a rather limited range of choices. They were able to learn a second language and take part in art and craft but there was no provision for drama, dance or music. Although most parents were pleased with the range of extra-curricular activities, inspectors found that there were insufficient opportunities for all students to be involved. Arrangements for the health and safety of the students were acceptable. Teachers throughout the school took their duty of care seriously, particularly in the KG classes where teachers and supervisors gave good care and attention to children's well-being, but there were no formal arrangements to ensure child protection. The quality of support for students was acceptable: healthy lifestyles were promoted and the school tracked students' progress through regular tests and assessments.

The leadership and management of the school were acceptable. The Principal provided staff with a clear sense of direction and the school ran smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Subject leaders did not give sufficient emphasis to monitoring the quality of work of teachers, or supporting them in developing their skills. Many teachers were new to the school and had insufficient professional training; there were no plans in place to address this through regular training. The school's processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable but arrangements for evaluating

teaching and learning were not rigorous enough to improve quality. Examination and assessment results were not analysed or used effectively enough to adjust teaching or the curriculum. Partnership with parents and the community were acceptable. Most parents were pleased with the information they received from the school. They indicated that they were always made to feel welcome and their views through the parents association were sought for major decisions. The governance of the school was unsatisfactory and the governing body was not representative of parents, teachers, or the community. The staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable; the school had sufficient qualified teaching staff to provide a broad and balanced curriculum.

### Key features of the school

- Attainment and progress were good in mathematics. Progress in mathematics from Grade 9 to Grade 12 was outstanding;
- The good behaviour, attitude and maturity of the students of all ages were evident throughout the school; older students demonstrated a good knowledge of the values which underpin UAE culture and heritage;
- Teaching and learning in KG classes were good, children found learning fun and enjoyed displaying their knowledge, showing confidence when reciting or retelling stories;
- Information about students' progress was not used effectively to modify teaching and learning approaches;
- There were no procedures in place to ensure child protection.

### Recommendations

- Improve students' reading and recitation skills in Arabic, and their range of writing in both English and Arabic;
- Improve the quality of teaching so that:
  - students have more opportunities in lessons to think for themselves and express their ideas using their experience, knowledge and imagination, rather than being textbook or teacher dependent;
  - assessment of students' progress is used to plan lessons which provide the right level of challenge in their work, specifically for those of higher ability;
- Increase the extra-curricular activities so that all students have opportunities to participate;
- Develop child protection procedures to help ensure the health and safety of all students at all time;
- Develop the role of subject leaders, so that they can be leaders of learning and ensure that all students make the progress that they should;
- Widen the membership of the governing body to include representatives from the community, especially parents.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were acceptable. Students' knowledge and understanding of the topics covered were in line with expectations. Students were making acceptable progress towards understanding the pillars of Islam and some Islamic practices. Students in Grade 2, for example, had a good understanding of ablution. Students in Grades 4, 6, 7 and 8 had an acceptable level of knowledge of the Prophet Mohammad's (PBUH) life and the life of other Islamic characters. Across the school most students were able to recite The Holy Qur'an accurately.

Progress and attainment in Arabic were acceptable. Progress in all grades in acquiring the key skills of talking, reading and writing was acceptable. Most students listened attentively to instructions in Arabic and responded accordingly. In Grade 5, for example, students' comprehension of stories learnt was in line with expectations. In Grade 6, most students were able to apply grammatical rules correctly and explain grammatical changes made to sentences. Some students in Grade 7 struggled with speaking and the pronunciation of words in Arabic.

Attainment and progress in English were acceptable across the school. By the end of KG children were able to answer simple questions correctly and read and copy a few familiar words accurately. Students in Grades 1 to 6 made slower progress in discussing or using new vocabulary. However, by the end of Grade 8, students were able to speak fluently, read stories and poems, though not extensively, and to write acceptable letters. Secondary aged students participated well in drama and group discussion; for example, one group gave a good presentation on superstitions. By the end of Grade 12, students could use language skills well in responding to different audiences. Students did not achieve well enough in creative writing as insufficient opportunities were given for self-expression. Most of their work in English took the form of functional writing rather than the development of other genres.

Attainment and progress in mathematics was good. In KG children could count to 50, understood the meaning of 'more', and could sing a wide range of number action songs from memory. Between Grades 1 to 8, students' attainment and progress were acceptable, although progress was slower between Grades 3 and 4 where they undertook too little practical work. By Grade 8, students had made good progress in calculation and could use their knowledge to solve number problems. They were developing a sound knowledge of geometry; for example, they knew about line segments. They demonstrated acceptable skills in numeracy; for example, they could work out direct proportion. In Grades 9 to 12, attainment was good overall and progress made in these grades was outstanding with students achieving well in advanced topics such as calculus. Across the school, there was little evidence of data handling or the use of computers to enhance teaching or learning.

Overall, the attainment and progress of students in science was acceptable. In lessons, students' progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding was as expected for their age. For example, children in KG knew about animal homes, healthy eating and personal hygiene and they were developing a natural curiosity. Grade 3 students could correctly differentiate between herbs, shrubs and trees. Steady progress was made throughout the primary grades so that, by Grade 8, students

were tackling more complex ideas such as the atomic arrangement in the allotropes of carbon and, by Grade 12, students could calculate the nuclear mass of an atom. However, high achieving and low achieving students did not always progress at a sufficient pace, as work was too often not well matched to their needs. Analysis of school examination results showed that students' progress from Grades 1 to 12 was inconsistent. The majority of students had good knowledge but their work revealed weaknesses in both scientific explanation and ability to apply their knowledge skills and understanding to real life examples.

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

The attitude and behaviour of students was good. They were polite and friendly and moved around the school in an orderly fashion. Almost all students were punctual. Relationships between teachers and students were good in the KG and primary. They became more formal, although still positive, in the secondary grades. Overall, school attendance for the first semester was acceptable.

In the KG and primary years, students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were acceptable. By the secondary grades, students had developed a much deeper knowledge of the values which underpin the UAE culture and heritage. The primary students said they were proud to live in Dubai and knew many places of interest. Students in the secondary grades were mature and articulate in describing their awareness of the impact of the economic recession on Dubai. The secondary school students thought that the school provided good opportunities to learn about Islam and many commented on how they felt that Islam propagated love for mankind and was a religion of peace.

Almost all students had good understanding of the key factors that characterised the success of Dubai. They understood the need to protect the environment and through activities such as recycling, planting more trees, and minimising plastic usage, they had contributed in many ways to the success of the school's environment club. The majority of students thought that a reduction in the volume of traffic would make Dubai a better place to live. They were highly motivated and aware of the contributions they could make to the continuing prosperity of the UAE.

### How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good in KG and acceptable throughout the rest of the school. In KG there were warm relationships between teachers and children, and teachers made effective use of displays, songs, rhymes and actions to interest and motivate children. Almost all secondary teachers had good subject knowledge but it was weak in science at primary level and in some Arabic lessons. Teachers' range of questioning techniques was rather limited; they asked questions to test previous knowledge, to motivate and to check students' understanding, but questions seldom invited in-depth answers. Most lessons consisted predominately of the teacher imparting knowledge through talking or demonstration and there were too few opportunities for students to contribute their own ideas and thoughts. Visual and practical resources, including information and communication technology, were seldom used either by teachers or students. In too many lessons, teachers simply followed the content of the textbook without any adaptation or imaginative interpretation to make the lesson

more interesting. An exception to this was the more lively approach adopted in mathematics lessons by teachers in primary classes, which was effective for most learners.

The quality of students' learning was good in KG and acceptable throughout the rest of the school. In KG, children enjoyed displaying their knowledge; for example, they showed confidence and humour when reciting or retelling stories. In Grades 1 to 12, most students were eager to learn, attentive and engaged in learning, although they were required to listen for long periods before being asked to respond by answering questions. In a small number of lessons there were examples of students' showing enjoyment and enthusiasm in using their communication and thinking skills. Learning was sometimes enhanced through group discussion, including for example, in Grade 12 English lessons, where students were often able to share thoughts and ideas. Students' learning was noticeably better when their interest was stimulated and they learned from each other. In the environment club for example, students made a presentation on the mission to the moon; this sparked an excellent response and led those attending to ask many questions. The benefits of this aspect of learning were rarely observed in classroom lessons. In primary science classes, students could relate what they were learning from charts and specimens to real life situations. However, elsewhere there were insufficient opportunities for them to develop skills of experimentation and investigation as the teachers conducted experiments while students watched. There was limited provision for students with special educational needs but low achievers were given extra time and help in their learning by the teachers during their free time; this enabled them to make at least acceptable, and often good, progress.

At the KG stage, assessment procedures were acceptable in that teachers checked on students' progress regularly through tests and marking of work. The information gathered did not, however, serve teachers' planning for future lessons and, as a consequence, in the primary and secondary grades, students of high ability were not always sufficiently challenged, as work was too easy and this limited their progress.

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

The quality of the school curriculum was acceptable. The KG curriculum was designed to encourage children's independence and self-confidence and included a good range of activities and learning experiences. The primary curriculum covered an appropriate range of subjects and offered a choice of four languages other than the students' mother tongue. Provision was made for extra classes outside school hours to support science students in Grades 10 and 12 with their preparation for examinations. The curriculum for Grades 8 to 12 closely adhered to the examination board content and provided an appropriate level of challenge for most students. The process of curriculum review was not documented and was limited to a review of textbooks and activities; it was rarely adapted to the meet the needs of the more able students. Although effective planning ensured that there were no gaps in students' learning experiences between the KG and primary classes, the transfer between primary and secondary grades was not smooth enough. There were insufficient extra-curricular activities for all students to be involved and no provision was made for art and music. However, preparation for benchmarking examinations conducted by international organisations helped develop

students' communication skills, confidence, team spirit and a healthy competitive attitude. Cross-curricular links, and links with extra-curricular activities, were acceptable in KG but limited for the remainder of the school. The school made good use of the surroundings for enhancing the curriculum. The students of the environmental club for example, maintained the school garden. There was limited provision for students with special needs and the school entrance examination precluded admission for almost all such students.

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

The school's arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of students were acceptable. In the KG, teachers and supervisors gave good care and attention to students' well-being. All students were effectively supervised in school and for their departure on the buses. The school had qualified medical staff with adequate medical facilities; first aid and emergency kits were provided in all the buses. Regular fire drills were carried out and recorded and students and teachers knew the procedures. Almost all the classrooms were clean, of adequate size, appropriately furnished, and adequately equipped for learning. Facilities provided for the students were well maintained and hygienic. The school's arrangements for child protection were informal.

The quality of support to students was acceptable. Teacher student relationships were warm and friendly in the KG and primary grades but, at times, somewhat over-formal in the secondary grades and this led to reluctance on the part of some older students to ask questions of their teachers. Teachers tracked the personal progress of students and had good knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses but there was insufficient guidance about careers. Though some staff had dealt sensitively with students' needs and concerns there was no plan in place for dealing with such problems. Good systems were in place for maintaining attendance and punctuality of students. Teachers across the school carried out regular half-termly and termly tests, and the school encouraged comprehensive, continuous and evaluative assessment through seminars, project work and practical assignments.

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

The leadership and management of the school were acceptable. The Principal had the confidence of the whole school community including the staff, governing body and the parents, the majority of whom believed the school was well led. The Principal provided staff with a clear sense of direction and the school ran smoothly on a day-to-day basis. At the level of middle management, however, the expectations of subject leaders were unclear and insufficient emphasis was given to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers were not well supported in developing their skills.

The school's processes for self-evaluation and improvement planning were at an early stage but acceptable. The school had an accurate view of its strengths and was aware of some of its weaknesses, but not the underlying reasons for these. Students' attainment and progress were assessed five times during the year, but the information obtained was not analysed and used effectively to modify either planning for teaching or the curriculum. Although the performance of teachers was monitored systematically throughout the year, the criteria used to evaluate the quality of teaching were not sufficiently rigorous to identify key weaknesses and ultimately to bring about

necessary change. Consequently, planning for school improvement was not specific enough in identifying action through which the necessary changes in the quality of teaching and learning could be achieved.

Partnership with parents and the community were acceptable. Most parents were pleased with the information they received from the school. They indicated that they were always made to feel welcome and through the parents association their views were sought regarding major decisions. The school's reports on students were not as informative as they could be and did not make clear how parents could support their child's learning to improve their attainment in school.

The governance of the school was unsatisfactory. The Principal, owner and administrative director met regularly and made recommendations for improvement to the facilities and educational provision, which were discussed with staff. However, the governing body was not representative of parents, teachers, or the community and there were no plans in place to widen representation.

The staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. The school had sufficient qualified teaching staff to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. However, many were new to the school and had insufficient professional training; there were no plans in place to address this through regular training. The school was generally well maintained, adequately furnished and equipped to meet the needs of most areas of the curriculum although the way that the library was used and resourced was a barrier to its potential as an effective means of improving students' reading and research skills.

## 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:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to12
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to12
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to 12
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to 12
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Good
Progress over time	Good	Acceptable	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to 12
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good is the students' personal and social development?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to 12
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good

How good are teaching and learning?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to 12
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to 12
Curriculum quality	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?			
Age group:	KG	Primary Grades 1 to 8	Secondary Grades 9 to 12
Health and safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Acceptable

## Next Steps

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

## How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact: [inspection@khda.gov.ae](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae).

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

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