

Lycee Libanais Francophone Prive Inspection Report

Maternelle to Secondaire

Report published May 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.

Lycée Libanais Francophone Privé was inspected in March 2011 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 Muhaisnah, the Lycée Libanais is a private school offering education to boys and girls aged three to 14 years, from maternelle to Grade 8. The school follows a French curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 597 students on roll. The 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. The majority of parents were pleased with the school; its ethos and care for the students. They felt that teaching was the school's main strength and that this led to good results in all subjects, especially in languages. They were less sure about the quality of Islamic Education. They considered that the school promoted their children's health and safety very well, and that students' behaviour was very good. Home-school links and communication were judged to be effective, apart from the timings of parent-teacher meetings. Almost all parents regarded the leadership of the school as good. The main concerns of parents focused on the limited range of facilities, resources and extra-curricular activities to broaden the scope of their children's learning.

How well does the school perform overall?

The Lycée Libanais was a good school. It had some outstanding features that included its quality of care for students, the outstanding behaviour and attitudes to work by students, and their linguistic skills, especially in French. It had improved rapidly in a short period of time. It had addressed issues relating to teaching and progress in primaire. Teaching skills had been updated and better facilities and resources were having a significant impact on some subjects. Most importantly, the school had rediscovered its esprit de corps, so that everyone was working together to support the school's development. The mutual support among staff, skilfully managed by the astute leadership of the principal, produced a common sense of purpose. Parents said that their children delighted in coming to school.

Attainment and progress had improved, especially in primaire. In all key subjects were good or better. Students' skills in French were outstanding for their age in all phases and they used it almost as a first language. English skills were also well developed and the ease with which the students switched between these two languages and Arabic was impressive. Not all subjects, though, were developing quite so well. Students developed very good personal and social skills and were very mature for their age. They were reflective and considerate individuals. They had a good understanding of the world at large, including the culture of Dubai as well as Lebanese ways and traditions. The school's ethos inspired open communication and the rapport between everyone at the school was excellent. Teachers respected the students and provided a broad and varied curriculum as a spur to learning. Although teachers did not all use assessment data skilfully to shape their lesson planning, the systems for recording progress had improved. As a result, assessment was as good as teaching and learning. There is every indication that the school is capable of sustaining this positive momentum of improvement.

Key features of the school

- The high levels of competence by students in three languages;
- The supportive, family ethos that imbued students with a strong awareness of culture both in the Lebanon and the UAE;
- The high quality of care and support for students that resulted in outstanding behaviour and personal relationships throughout the school;
- The improvements in attainment and progress, especially in the primaire, and also in French, English and science;
- The consistently effective teaching that enabled students to develop very good learning skills;
- The strong and enlightened leadership that had spearheaded and underpinned the school's development;

- The inconsistency in the use of assessment data to ensure that all work is challenging as possible, especially for the more able students;
- The weaknesses in resources in some subjects, and especially for sport.

Recommendations

- Ensure that all teachers use assessment data routinely to plan lessons so that they are consistently challenging, especially for the more able students;
- Maximise all opportunities for interactive learning, especially in mathematics;
- Improve the range of classroom activities in the teaching of Arabic, especially opportunities to strengthen writing skills;
- Expand the range and quality of facilities and resources, especially for sport, mathematics, Islamic Education and Arabic.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were good. Across the school, most students were able to recite and memorise short chapters of The Holy Qur'an with only a few errors. A few students could apply the recitation rules correctly. Most students had a strong knowledge of key concepts such as the five Pillars of Islam, and the pillars of faith. They could describe the characteristics of the people of Paradise and the people of Hell. Most students had good knowledge of the Prophet's life (PBUH) and could recite the Hadeeth with a good understanding of the general meaning. Most students could understand many of the values of Islam but a minority knew how to apply them in their lives. Their understanding of the duties and responsibilities of Muslims was underdeveloped.

Overall, attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language were good. In all grades, listening skills of students were good; they understood the instructions from the teacher and were able to respond to questions successfully. In primaire, most of the students could use standard Arabic in clear sentences to express themselves in extended responses. However, students' writing skills were limited as they did not have enough opportunities to practise extended writing. In secondaire, the majority of students could read confidently familiar and unfamiliar texts. They could explain the meaning well and recognise different points of view. Across the school, the majority of students demonstrated a good level of grammatical understanding and could apply this well in new contexts.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were acceptable across the school. Most students had acceptable listening skills. They understood most spoken words and had a reasonable range of familiar expressions. Most students could express themselves well using adequate vocabulary in explaining their ideas or answers. In primaire, most students could read the words they had learned with the correct vowel sounds. In secondaire, the majority of students could write longer sentences and short paragraphs with few mistakes.

Across the school, a few students had an appropriate level of grammatical understanding, such as masculine and feminine agreements.

Attainment and progress in French were outstanding. Even though French was the third language of the majority of students, their listening skills were highly proficient and students demonstrated high levels of confidence whilst speaking. In maternelle, children knew their letters, and read and copied short sentences accurately. They could discuss endangered species and habitat loss. Their vocabulary increased significantly through listening to stories and singing. In primaire, their knowledge and accuracy of grammar increased swiftly. In later primary stages, they read and appreciated novels and wrote in even, cursive script both imaginatively and for specific purposes, using long paragraphs and imaginative vocabulary. In secondaire, students evaluated and summarised factual and literary texts. They could describe, for example, the attributes of tragic-comedy, compare the works of Molière and build up convincing arguments.

Students' attainment and progress in English were good in primaire, and outstanding in secondaire. For most students, English was their second language. Their speaking and debating skills in the upper years were particular strengths. Students were able to question, debate and hypothesise very competently. For example, they were able to discuss complex issues on human rights. Students in primaire were able to listen confidently to stories and accurately record key points. All students were encouraged to use English throughout the lessons. Writing was good across the school. Almost all students were able to write in different genres, for example news reports, presentations and creative writing. In all classes, when working collaboratively, students demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure above standards expected for second language learners. Students' reading skills were less well developed, particularly in the primaire.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were good across the school. In maternelle, most children made good progress in reading, counting and ordering numbers. They could create repeating patterns, recognise simple 2D shapes and were at the early stages of calculation. In primaire, most students were skilled in using number operations, could calculate mentally and could quickly recall multiplication facts. They had a good understanding of basic geometry but progress in solving problems was inconsistent. Overall, they were well prepared for the more demanding mathematical concepts in secondaire where the majority of students made good progress in calculation, algebra, and geometry. Progress of the more able students was not as good as that of other students in many classes. In addition, students had limited awareness of how mathematics relates to the real world.

Attainment and progress in science were good across the school. This represented a significant improvement since the previous report because of a change of emphasis to a more investigative and practical approach to learning. Students acquired a good and varied knowledge of scientific facts and figures by carrying out varied and, occasionally, open-ended investigations. For example, children in the maternelle understood the movement of sunlight by plotting it hourly on a large sundial. Grade 4 students were able to devise simple tests to purify water and Grade 8 students could identify and measure electrical tension. Less able

students made the best progress because they received extra help from their peers and teachers. More able students were not always able to learn at their own pace because tasks were not always challenging enough.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. They were polite, considerate and respectful. They listened attentively to each other in class and appreciated other points of view. They played co-operatively with one another during the school day and demonstrated exemplary behaviour when they left school at the end of the day. They were well aware of the need to eat healthily and made astute food choices. The majority led an active lifestyle. Relationships with all staff were outstanding and represented a cornerstone of the school's success. Students knew that they were highly valued by staff and reciprocated readily. Students' attendance was good and their punctuality was excellent.

Students' civic responsibility, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good. Most students were well aware of Islamic values and how they permeated life in Dubai and the expatriate community. Most students were proud of their own cultural heritage; they could talk confidently about traditional foods, clothes and games. They were also well aware of local culture and history such as the important role that Sheik Zayed played in forming the UAE. Most students were able to talk confidently about the positive and negative aspects of the nature of Dubai's multi-lingual and multi-cultural society. The student council supported special occasions well but were not proactive enough in generating their own actions or activities.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was good throughout the school. They were aware of the facts behind Dubai's development and of the challenges faced internationally as a consequence of changes in the global economy. They were able to compare Dubai with other Emirates and referred to the ease of trade with India and Pakistan. They knew that Dubai needed to desalinate its water and use it carefully. They appreciated the important role that tourism played in its economy. Students were proud to play their part in saving resources by collecting paper to recycle; they had also been involved in a project to clear litter from a desert area. However, they showed little initiative to suggest their own actions to promote environmental awareness.

How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching was good throughout the school. Changes in staffing and well-focused training had enabled the primaire to become as good as the other sections. Not all teaching was equally effective, especially in maternelle and lower primaire, but about three-quarters of lessons seen were good or better. Classrooms were generally positive and productive learning environments. The excellent rapport with their teachers meant that students were attentive and worked hard. Teachers had strong subject knowledge and many had the ability to bring it alive and fascinate students. Brisk questioning helped the teachers to assess students' understanding and strengthen learning. Teachers were very organised so that resources were

to hand and little time was lost for learning. In the best lessons, expectations of students were high and support for individuals was perceptive and deft. Quite often, though, lessons were too controlled or had an over-reliance on textbooks so that students were not inspired or able to learn for themselves. More importantly, teachers did not use assessment data skilfully and routinely to influence their planning, especially to help more able students.

Students' learning skills were good overall. Students had a very mature work ethic; they needed no persuasion to start work. Listening and concentration were excellent, as was their behaviour. Their excellent inter-personal skills and respect for others enabled them to work very successfully in groups. On the other hand, they worked equally well on their own. They took great pride in their work; they were eager to get things right, whether it was spelling, handwriting or the design of a picture. However, they did not have enough scope to develop their higher order thinking skills. They could often apply their learning to the real world but this attribute was underdeveloped.

Assessment had improved since the last inspection and was good throughout the school. It remained a key part of planning in maternelle. The school had established a very good system to record students' performance to track individual and group progress. Not all teachers were taking advantage of this and other assessment to influence their planning of lessons, however. Marking, an issue at the previous inspection, had improved, although teachers did not supply regular comments or suggestions on how students could improve their work. Oral feedback in lessons, though, was mostly very good.

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

The curriculum was good across the school. The school had adapted the curriculum to ensure better breadth and balance; it offered a good range of experiences including art, dance and physical education. The use of course books as an underlying framework ensured continuity of learning through all year groups. In science and English, the curriculum had been improved. There was much more scope for students to learn through an investigative approach in science and in English. Projects of global interest, such as human rights, added breadth, creativity and relevance. The curriculum in mathematics was too reliant on textbooks and worksheets, thus limiting the opportunities for students to work at their own pace, particularly the most able. Art was a strength in the curriculum, especially in graphic design. Cross-curricular activities reinforced learning across subjects and motivated students. In maternelle, children undertook a project about the desert, seaside and city that integrated many subjects including writing, geography and science. However, teachers did not plan enough of these activities. Although there were frequently opportunities for students to develop their higher order thinking and problem-solving skills, such opportunities were not an intrinsic part of the curriculum. Students' learning was enriched by a variety of features. Members of the community, including the Consul General from the French Embassy, visited the school to give talks on subjects related to the curriculum. Visits outside school broadened students' horizons and awareness of such topics as desert wildlife or printing techniques.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were outstanding. Staff throughout the school took their duty of care very seriously. Clear expectations and well-rehearsed routines throughout the day and on the school buses ensured students were safe. Meticulous records were kept of fire drills, medicines and accidents, which were mainly of a minor nature and treated by the school nurse. A doctor and dietician visited regularly to monitor students' health and provide guidance on being healthy. The variety of sports offered was enjoyed by most students. The premises were extremely clean and tidy, and equipment was maintained in good condition. Although wheelchair ramps were in place on the ground floor, there was no lift access to the upper floor. Students knew who to speak to about a problem of any kind. Regular visits by an educational psychologist ensured staff, students and parents learned how to deal with personal problems and this helped to enhance emotional well-being.

The quality of support for students was good overall. Relationships between staff and students were outstanding as was the management of students' behaviour and the pastoral care provided by staff and supervisors. Guidance on future education options was appropriate for the age of the students. The monitoring of attendance and punctuality was effective. An impressive tracking system had recently been created to record students' test results and to produce detailed reports to parents, but it could not yet track progress over time and was not used to identify students with special educational needs. Additional support was provided for underachievers in soutien (support) sessions but these were not consistently effective in ensuring good progress.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership of the school was good. The clear-sighted, determined and inclusive leadership of the Principal was especially impressive. This had produced an excellent team spirit in the school so that all staff not only shared a common vision but were galvanised to pursue it vigorously together. The Principal was well supported by senior and subject leaders, most effectively in English, science, art and maternelle. Staff were mostly keen to improve themselves for the benefit of the students. Recent training on differentiated learning was beginning to have a positive impact. The school had addressed the recommendations from the last inspection decisively and successfully. In doing so, it demonstrated a good capacity to improve further.

Self-evaluation and development planning were good. The school knew its strengths and weaknesses very well through open channels of communication among staff, improved recording of students' progress and regular monitoring. Although its development plans were rather broad and lacked detail, the outcomes showed that they were effective. New assessment systems, new resources for science and information and communications technology (ICT), and better attainment and progress demonstrated this. Crucially, the Principal had involved all stakeholders in the planning and decision-making through joint workshops of

students, parents and staff. In this way, the action plans had credibility, agreed priorities and a common sense of purpose.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents were very supportive of the school, especially as they felt that their children were happy and fulfilled. Parents appreciated the open-door policy of the school. They felt staff were very approachable and quickly resolved any issues. Parents knew their voices mattered. The comité des parents was a valuable conduit for parents' concerns but it was also very active in social and fundraising activities. Reports to parents about academic progress were regular and informative, providing grades in all subjects and giving clear messages of praise or concern where appropriate. Community links both near and far were productive, including environmental projects in the desert and liaison with schools in France and the Lebanon.

Governance was good. The management and development of the school were multi-faceted and involved a range of stakeholders. The comité exécutif had clear overview of the school and held the senior leadership to account on a regular basis. The conseil de direction pédagogique provided clear education direction together with its partner school in the Lebanon. The conseil d'établissement, which met termly, involved academic and pastoral staff members, as well as student representatives. All these bodies were formally constituted and were influential on the school's direction and performance.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. Teachers were well qualified and shared a range of good knowledge and experience. Classrooms were large, airy and gave good space for work. Some facilities had been improved, such as the science laboratory, ICT room and a new reference room for students in secondaire. Facilities were adequate for sport but limited in scope; however, the school's plans for a new gymnasium were well advanced. Some resources, such as computers, had been improved but there were weaknesses in the resources for Islamic Education, Arabic and mathematics.

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:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic? 98% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Good	Good
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Good	Good
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:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Outstanding
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in French?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good

How good is the students' personal and social development?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	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:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

How well does the school protect and support students?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Good	Good	Good

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	Good
Governance	Good
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.

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