

Delhi Private School Dubai 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.

Delhi Private School Dubai 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 The Gardens, Jebel Ali, Delhi Private School, Dubai is a private school providing education for boys and girls from pre-primary to secondary, aged three to seventeen years. The school follows a CBSE curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 2900 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 (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents. Most parents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the overall quality of education available. Almost all parents felt that their children's progress in English and mathematics was satisfactory or better. The majority of parents regarded the teaching as good. They stated that their children enjoyed lessons and their enthusiasm for learning was at least good. However a minority of parents did not feel that extra-curricular opportunities provided by the school were good enough. Almost all parents believed that the behaviour of students in the school was satisfactory or better. More than half of the parents regarded the school's resources as good or better and most parents felt the school supported their children and kept them safe.

How well does the school perform overall?

The Delhi Private School provided a good quality of education with some outstanding features. Leadership was outstanding. Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The Principal and senior leaders knew the strengths and relative shortcomings of the school. As a result, the school had made good progress towards improving the effectiveness of middle management and the quality of the teaching and learning, which was good. Attainment and progress were good in English, mathematics and science. In Islamic Education and Arabic they were acceptable. The students' behaviour and attitudes across the school were outstanding.

The curriculum was outstanding in the pre-primary phase and good throughout the primary and secondary phases. Its main strengths included the breadth and balance between academic and social skills, and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities. All subjects promoted high quality speaking skills in English. Health and safety arrangements, and advice and guidance for the students were outstanding. The students had a strong sense of community responsibility. The senior leadership of the school had a clear vision. There was a strong focus on improvement and the steps needed to achieve it.

Key features of the school

- Attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic were acceptable;
- Attainment and progress were good in English, mathematics and science;
- Students' behaviour was exemplary and attitudes to learning were outstanding;
- Health and safety procedures were outstanding; students were well supported in all aspects of school life;
- The outstanding quality of school leadership had helped the school to make very good progress against the recommendations of the previous inspection.

Recommendations

- Improve attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Improve short-term assessment methods so that students know what to do next to improve;
- Build on current best practice to ensure greater consistency of good quality teaching across the school.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education across the school were acceptable. In the primary stage, most students had good knowledge about the key concepts of Islam such as the Pillars of Islam. They knew about the daily prayers and the famous battles in the history of Islam. They recited short chapters from The Holy Qur'an. In the secondary stage, most students learned a number of longer chapters from The Holy Qur'an in addition to a few of the Prophet's Sayings. However, across the school, only a few students demonstrated sufficient understanding of how they could apply what they had learned to real life concepts and explain their duties and responsibilities as Muslims.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were acceptable. In the primary school, the majority of students used an acceptable range of vocabulary in their writing and speaking. In the secondary school most students had a satisfactory grammatical knowledge and could apply it to a few simple and familiar sentences. The majority of students across the school could write short phrases and sentences, although their ability to write extensively was less developed. At all stages, students demonstrated acceptable levels of listening and reading comprehension.

Attainment and progress in English were good across the school. Students made good progress in Kindergarten. In Kindergarten 1 they had good knowledge of the alphabet in lower and upper cases and in Kindergarten 2 they could write short words and sentences. Listening, reading and speaking skills across the school were good; most students could speak fluently in class as well as in the assembly. They were creative and exhibited confidence in writing and listening. Lower secondary students were able to develop a story and express their viewpoints fluently. Attainment in CBSE examinations showed recent improvement.

Attainment in mathematics was good. All students were making good progress developing a range of mathematical skills. Kindergarten children had learned to count and recognise numbers to five. They knew that adding or taking away objects from a small group would affect the total numbers. Primary students could add, subtract, multiply and divide decimal numbers. They could use long division when working with large numbers. In a Grade 6 class, students used these skills when calculating the surface area of cardboard boxes they were investigating. Grade 10 students were able to solve quadratic equations and apply the principles of Pythagoras to calculate the curved surface area of compound solid objects. At the advanced level students used differential calculus to solve complex problems.

Attainment and progress in science were good. Students in Grade 1 had an understanding of the origins of food and in Grade 2 they could categorise different food types. By Grade 6 students had a good understanding of the classification of food groups and their nutritional roles. Good progress was evident throughout the secondary school; Grade 8 students could explain their conclusions when performing practical work involving the chemical displacement of metals and Grade 10 students were competent when investigating refraction of light. Grade 8, standards were in line with age-related expectations and by Grade 10 they were above

international benchmarks. Post-16 results in CBSE showed that almost two thirds of these students gained distinction grades.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. The students were self-disciplined and attentive, courteous and showed sustained concentration in class. They had excellent attitudes to work; they applied and committed themselves in collaborative groups and individually. Their relationships with each other and with staff were exceptional. Those presenting in assemblies displayed excellent presentational skills and self-confidence. Students were rightly proud of their achievements and were true ambassadors of their school. They showed a strong commitment to following a healthy lifestyle. Attendance this term was outstanding and all students arrived punctually for lessons.

Students had a good understanding of Islam, its values and its impact in the society. They demonstrated good knowledge about Islamic practices and festivals. The school assemblies and displays in the corridors featured good visual Islamic elements which showed that students understood the relevance of Islam in their lives. There was a strong sense of community values and students were very aware of those less fortunate than themselves. They took part in helping social causes in the summer holidays. The students took pride in the multi-cultural character of Dubai and were proud of its rich ambience. They were keen to contribute towards its future by serving in the health centres, Dubai police and by wanting to make Dubai a more eco-friendly place.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was good. Students were aware of the economic potential that Dubai held for them as future citizens. They had knowledge of the economic crisis that Dubai had recently faced and its impact on residents. Students were committed to addressing environmental issues by taking a proactive role in campaigns led by organisations such as Dubai Cares, Emirates Environmental Club. In school, resource and power conservation drives were undertaken regularly and continued at home.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of the teaching was good. Teachers had a good knowledge of their subjects although there was some variation in the quality of teaching across the school. In the best lessons teachers matched the challenge and context well to the students' abilities, and provided relevant practical activities that required the students to work collaboratively. They encouraged students to work together to solve problems and prompted them to develop their learning skills. In the weakest lessons, teachers did not enable the students to experience a range of activities and students did not always have opportunities to speak or to apply their emerging writing skills.

The quality of learning was good. Kindergarten children spent much of their time learning through interesting practical activities. In the primary school students' learning skills improved and students were able to work productively in groups. In a Grade 1 lesson about vegetarian food, discussion and debate prompted students to think more carefully about their opinions. Older students responded well when solving practical problems in small groups. They accepted assigned tasks and shared information generously. For example, in a Grade 8 lesson students were investigating the construction of common forms of packaging. Students collaborated and shared the tasks, and used skills such as measurement, calculation, sketches and notes to obtain and convey information to others. The students' excellent manners and behaviour and their positive relationships contributed to the quality of their learning.

The quality of assessment at the school was acceptable. Assessment procedures had not developed alongside the improvements in teaching. There was a thorough and comprehensive process of assessing what the students had learned and could do. The school used a mixture of internal grading and externally set and validated examinations. The external validation had provided the school with opportunities to compare how well students were doing in relation to relevant international standards. Nevertheless, the use of on-going assessment to help both teachers and students set short term targets and modify their planning was not yet in place.

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

The quality of the curriculum was outstanding in Kindergarten and good in the rest of the school. The curriculum had a clear rationale that met the needs of the students, parents, and was in keeping with the school's aims and mission. The curriculum was defined clearly by the requirements of the CBSE and there were specific school enhancements. Across the school the curriculum had both breadth and balance between academic and social aspects and provided choice, particularly in after-school activities. Review was ongoing and proactive taking the suggestions of students into account; one recent change built social issues into project-based work in sustainable development. Regular meetings across phases of education were robust and planning for progression was thorough. Previous learning was taken into account when lessons were planned. Activities had cross-curricular links and allowed students to build on their strengths. Assemblies played an important part in raising awareness of global and local issues and celebrating achievements whilst giving students opportunities to extend their learning and skills. The range of extra-curricular activities was extensive; Ninety students took part in the 'Rock Show' which they won in three categories; others have won the UAE volleyball championship and are now competing internationally.

How well does the school protect and support students?

The school provided outstanding care and protection for students. The safe buildings, playgrounds, classrooms and all other facilities ensured that student care was the very best across the entire school. Safety in play areas and the close supervision of children throughout the day were some of the highlights of the systems laid down by school management. The school bus arrangements for arrival and dispersal were highly efficient, and precautions were taken to ensure safe movement. Practising healthy living was an integral part of the school programme. A qualified medical team maintained meticulous documentation of students' health records, tracked the food habits of students and advised on food in the cafeteria. The staff had been trained to address issues related to the protection of children. There were regular fire drills, clear evacuation plans and proper maintenance of equipment. This all ensured that the school maintained a safe and secure environment.

The student-teacher relationship was based on mutual trust and respect. An excellent support system led by counsellors and special educators was available for students with special needs. This was valued by the parents. The school tracked and monitored students' progress, and set individual goals. Students were satisfied with the guidance they received from the counsellor and other adults who helped them select universities for further study and make career choices. Students were well prepared for the world of work and for higher education through enterprise activities.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was outstanding. The Principal and senior leadership had a clear vision of the kind of school they wanted and the experiences that children would have during their time at the school. Since the last inspection the leadership of the school had made a determined effort to improve both the teaching and the effectiveness of the middle managers. Middle managers across the school were given clear direction by the Principal and her core team. They were encouraged to monitor the work of the school and provided regular reports on progress in their areas of responsibility. They had undertaken several professional development opportunities. Appraisal was a regular feature of the school's drive for improvement and performance management was undertaken regularly in a collegiate manner.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The school had a clear idea of its strengths and weaknesses. Since the last inspection the school had highlighted the recommendations as priorities for all staff and had made good progress towards meeting them successfully. The school had a strong focus on its improvement agenda and was aware of the next steps it needed to take.

The school had good systems and processes in place that helped to enhance parental engagement and collaboration. The parents were sent regular reports, had parent-teacher meetings three times a year and were invited to all major functions. Along with a bi-monthly newsletter, which gave information about events in the school, the school made communication easy through various other means. There were regular parent-teacher meetings in every term, diaries were used and teachers could be contacted by telephone. The parents were happy with the school's involvement, personal care and its effort towards delivering a holistic education. The school's close relationship and concern for the community could be seen in its efforts to help children with special needs (Al Noor), to adopt and fund orphans (Give India) and even by teaching ICT to employees.

Governance in the school was good. The board ensured there were clear lines of accountability through the Principal and had focused on issues of academic standards. They ensured the agreed key priorities of the school were met. Parental access to the owners was through their attendance at the various evenings and celebration events. There was a new operational committee that had parent and teacher representation and involvement. The committee had recently had its first meeting.

Staffing and facilities were good. The school had a sufficient number of well-qualified teaching staff, along with support staff, who shared the motivation to enhance the differentiated learning of the students. The school had four libraries and a teacher resource room. There was a specialist ICT room. Laptops were available for class use and several classrooms were equipped with interactive whiteboards. The presence of a mathematics laboratory, language laboratory, computer and science laboratories, adequately served to create the learning environment. The facilities had been further enhanced by the addition of the new sporting complex with a large swimming pool and a new teaching block. The staff had received many high quality workshops aimed at improving students' learning. The deployment of the staff was efficient and their academic work-load equitably allocated according to their responsibilities and qualifications.

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	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	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	Good	Good	Good

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

How good is the students' personal and social development?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
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:	Pre-Primary	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	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	Outstanding	Good	Good

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

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
	Overall
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
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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