

Jumeirah College Inspection Report

Years 7 to 13

Report published May 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.

Jumeirah College was inspected in October 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, 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 Jumeirah, Jumeirah College is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Year 7 to Year 13, aged 11 to 18 years. The school follows the English National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 931 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents were very happy with the school and almost all parents agreed that their children liked school, that the teaching was good, that their children were treated fairly and that they were being encouraged to become independent and responsible people. Parents liked the range of activities available to their children and almost all agreed that they were comfortable approaching the school with any questions or complaints and they felt that the school would act promptly to address any issues. They stated that their children were well cared for and that teachers were good at explaining to parents what they could do at home to help with their children's work. Local community links were thought to be good, but more than a quarter of parents were unsure about the school's response to the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Parents were very happy with their children's progress in all subjects except for Islamic Education, where many parents were unsure of progress and Arabic, where a significant proportion of parents felt that attainment and progress were not good. Many parents took the opportunity to submit written comments about a variety of issues; above all else there were two common concerns from several parents and these

related to the large number of different principals which the school has had in recent years and the increases in the fees they were paying for the children's education.

How well does the school perform overall?

Jumeirah College was a good school with many outstanding features. Inspectors judged students' attainment to be well above international averages and their progress to be outstanding in all the key subjects inspected, apart from Islamic Education, Arabic, and English. In English, attainment was good at secondary and post-16 phases and progress was outstanding in the secondary phase and, in the post-16 phase, it was good. In Islamic Education and Arabic both attainment and progress were acceptable at best, and at secondary Arabic attainment was unsatisfactory. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the students were outstanding. Students were exceptionally polite and welcoming. They showed great diligence towards their studies and most displayed maturity beyond their years. They had a good understanding of Islam and their personal responsibilities as citizens of the multi-cultural society. Students' understanding of the contemporary issues related to economics and the environment was outstanding.

The teaching in most of the key subjects was of an exceptionally high quality with many lessons in key subjects being of good or outstanding quality in these subjects. Most teachers were expert practitioners who planned their lessons well, used resources, including information and communication technology, to very good effect. This expertise resulted in lessons which were exciting, challenging and stimulating; the love of learning was firmly planted in the minds of students, who, through their engagement and positive attitudes to learning created an ethos of enjoyment and high achievement. Teachers assessed the students' progress regularly and many provided highly constructive feedback to students on their work and the areas for improvement, though the quality of marking in students' exercise books was not of a uniformly high standard in all departments. The curriculum offered students a rich breadth of learning experiences. It was exceptionally broad and very well balanced, with many opportunities for artistic, creative and sporting endeavour running alongside a challenging and rigorous coverage of the key academic areas of learning. The curriculum was under regular review and it was enhanced considerably by a wide range of out-of-school activities encompassing sport, performance and adventure. The students were kept safe and they were well cared for by the school's many ancillary and professional support staff as well as the teachers.

The school leadership was of outstanding quality with a strong senior leadership team creating a sense of purpose through a strong vision based upon an ethos of high achievement, courtesy and respect. Arrangements for critical self-evaluation and improvement planning were very well developed both within the school and as part of the commitment to excellence and continuous improvement. The large staff was well qualified and had many opportunities for professional development to serve individual and whole school needs. Both the school premises and the resources for learning were of a very high order. Classrooms were bright, well-furnished and maintained to a high standard; there were specialist facilities for science, art, music, and design technology as well as whole school resources for information technology and a well-stocked library.

Key features of the school

- The outstanding progress made by students in most of the key subjects and attainment in public examinations which was well above international averages;
- The outstanding behaviour and attitudes of the students and their capacity to take responsibility for their own learning;
- The outstanding leadership and management which provided vision and purpose with high ambition;
- The outstanding curriculum which was rich, exciting and challenging and provided opportunities for students both in and out of regular school time.

Recommendations

- Raise standards of attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic by:-
 - Improving the quality of teaching and learning;
 - Developing the curriculum so that it meets fully the needs of students whose first language is Arabic, as well as those for whom it is a second language;
 - Devising methods for the assessment and tracking of attainment and progress which are accurate, timely and provide better feedback to the students.
- Improve arrangements for assessing students' work so that there is greater consistency between subject departments and the regular marking and feedback to students is more detailed and informative;
- Seek to improve school governance by creating a formal channel of communication and wider representation from all relevant stakeholders.

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

In Islamic Education, both attainment and progress were acceptable for non-Arab Muslims. The majority of students made progress in their knowledge and understanding of Islamic values and principles and most of them were developing their skills of recitation of The Holy Qur'an. Although Arab Muslims had difficulty accessing the curriculum in Arabic, most students made acceptable progress, in relation to their starting point, by learning the subject in English. The best progress they made was in the knowledge and understanding of Islamic values and principles. However, attainment for this small number of students was below the level expected from the Ministry of Education curriculum.

In Arabic as an additional language, the majority of students made acceptable progress overall in relation to their starting point. Most students made significant progress in their reading and writing of Arabic script in lower grades. Only a minority of students made acceptable progress in speaking, listening and writing in the higher grades and the range of vocabulary they used was limited. However, attainment was still unsatisfactory given the number of previous years of study and the level of ability and skills required for those students to continue their studies to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level. The minority of students who studied Arabic as a first language made acceptable progress in relation to their starting points, particularly in the reading and writing of Arabic script in the lower grades. However, in relation to Ministry of Education curriculum expectations, students' attainment was unsatisfactory.

Attainment in English at both GCSE and Advanced Level was well above international averages, with a high proportion of students gaining the higher grades. Progress was outstanding towards the end of secondary phase and good in the Sixth Form. Students developed a broad vocabulary and high standards of listening and speaking skills. Students in Year 11 discussed dramatic monologue with skill and detected emotive language and ellipsis when analysing war poems. Almost all read and wrote fluently, and in the main, grammatically though spelling errors still occurred. Students in Years 12 and 13 presented good arguments in literary appreciation essays.

In mathematics, at secondary level attainment was outstanding and improving in comparison with international standards. In the Sixth Form, attainment overall was good in comparison with international A-level results. However, the proportion gaining the highest grades was outstanding. Progress throughout the school was outstanding. Mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding were well-developed. In Key Stage 3, almost all students were confident in number and made excellent use of their mental agility to support learning in other areas such as calculating missing angles. Students were excited when they had opportunities to investigate new concepts such as Fibonacci's golden ratio and solve problems through practical activities. This rich foundation in learning and their excitement for mathematics provided them with a good grounding for the more formal examination programmes in which most excelled.

Students' progress in science was outstanding throughout the school, and their attainment was well above UK national and international averages at GCSE and at A-level. In the secondary phase students had a very good understanding of physical, biological and chemical processes. They understood the need to be good observers and to carry out fair tests in order to get valid results. By the end of the secondary phase they could identify dependent and independent variables in experimental procedures, though their capacity to form hypotheses was somewhat limited in the early part of their post-16 study.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. Positive relationships were evident throughout the school. Students were mature, exercised self-discipline and could work independently or in collaboration with others. They were comfortable asking an adult for help if needed. Attendance was good and most students arrived on time for lessons, showing a mature attitude towards timekeeping since the school day was not punctuated with bells.

Students were able to describe how they might contribute to the future of Dubai. They had a developing understanding and appreciation of Islam and had a developing awareness of the behaviour expected of them. Some students prayed at noon. All students were positive about the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and confirmed that the school's diversity had enhanced their experiences and their lives. Students knew about traditional homes and costumes, and could relate this to the history of Dubai.

Students were developing into excellent citizens of the world. Their voice was influential in bringing about significant changes within the school such as a new uniform, healthier lunches and a new Sixth Form Block. They understood how Dubai had developed and the impact this had had on their lives. Their awareness of local and global issues, such as traffic pollution and the benefits of the new metro system was excellent and they cared for the environment by recycling and energy conservation.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The teaching and learning were of outstanding quality in all areas of the school except in Islamic Education and Arabic, where several unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Most teachers were expert practitioners who not only knew their subjects well but had a good understanding about how it was learnt. Lessons were well planned and time was used efficiently and effectively as classes proceeded with a challenging pace coupled with high expectations. Resources for learning were plentiful and teachers used them extensively to enhance their lessons and promote learning. Many teachers were expert practitioners with interactive whiteboards and the use of video clips from internet sites; their use enlivened many lessons and served to make the learning more contemporary and relevant. Teachers used classroom dialogue to excellent effect, and they challenged the students with probing questions, searching for understanding and not accepting short or superficial answers. Teachers worked in highly productive learning partnerships with the classroom assistants, many of whom were

deployed to excellent effect, often to work with students who needed additional help with their learning.

Students were highly responsible learners, they were engaged and stimulated by lessons and were diligent about completing independent assignments and homework. Students were respectful towards each other and they were equally successful when working individually, in pairs or in groups. Through expert guidance and instruction many students were able to apply their learning to the real contexts, and Sixth Form students had a good awareness of their responsibilities both as learners and as citizens. Enquiry and research skills were developing well through the secondary phase of the school. In the Sixth Form whilst students' progress was mostly outstanding, certain elements of their attainment were hampered by a degree of underdevelopment of critical and higher-order thinking skills in the early part of their A-level journey.

The high quality of assessment and monitoring of students' progress was a strong feature of the school. Students' learning potential was established through rigorous baseline assessments and their progress was constantly measured against predicted performance. The analysis and use of data to inform future planning was highly sophisticated at a whole school level and many subject departments, especially mathematics, used the data to provide challenges at the appropriate level for all students. Self and peer assessment strategies were a regular feature and most students had a very good idea of the National Curriculum level at which they were working. In many respects the quality of feedback to the students was good. However, the quality of marking was inconsistent by teachers within and between departments.

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

The school offered a rich curriculum of outstanding quality. In addition to the English National Curriculum, with three separate sciences, it offered three modern languages, Arabic, French and Spanish. It had significantly improved its provision for Islamic Education and Arabic since the previous inspection but the time allocation for Arabic as a first language was still below the Ministry of Education requirements. As part of a regular curriculum review process, the management had broadened its range of courses, such as business studies and distant learning programmes, using video conferencing, had been introduced for subjects of interest to only a minority of students such as accounting, law and sociology. A learning support centre provided outstanding provision for a few students with a range of learning needs. Skilled staff directed their guidance to enable students to manage or overcome their difficulties. They worked closely with class teachers to link with their current needs, for example by focusing attention on enabling students to complete coursework. Students enjoyed an excellent choice of creative and sporting opportunities both in school and as extra-curricular activities. They developed individual interests in media, drama and sports; the school fielded fifty sports teams, regularly produced musical and drama productions and ran activities preparing for the Duke of Edinburgh award. Individual students gained awards, such as Young Musician and film awards. Several opted to provide service, for example in Kenya, as part of the Duke of

Edinburgh Award. During the inspection students collected over a thousand books for the developing world. Parental offers of work experience and guidance on specific careers contributed well to careers education.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for protecting students were outstanding. All staff took their duty of care seriously; they knew and adhered to the policies for health and safety. Arrivals and departures were well-co-ordinated and supervised by conscientious security guards who patrolled the site throughout the day. Buildings and facilities, including transport and the swimming pool, were safe, secure and well-maintained. Teaching areas were bright, spacious, clean and well-ventilated. Procedures for emergencies, such as fire-drills, were well-established. Equipment was checked and appropriate staff were trained to use it. Regular health and safety checks and risk assessments ensured accidents were kept to the minimum. Healthy lifestyles were promoted through the personal, social, health and civic education programme and through out-of-school clubs with additional support and guidance from the school nurse and the student counsellor. Students benefited from and welcomed the excellent guidance that was available about careers and university applications. Child-protection procedures were in place and sensitively managed with regard to the diverse cultural mix in the school. Excellent information about safe internet practice was provided for parents and students through the school's website.

The quality of support for students was outstanding. Staff provided excellent role-models and relationships were positive. Students respected and cared for each other and the school's positive approach, together with students' own maturity, ensured behaviour was outstanding. There were well-developed systems for data-analysis, tracking students' progress and providing additional support where necessary in most subjects. Guidance and support for students with additional learning needs was outstanding. Attendance was well-monitored. Students reported that they felt safe in school and that teachers provided outstanding support. There were effective and well-managed care arrangements across the school reinforced by the strong links with parents.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of the leadership and management of the school was outstanding. The maturity, commitment and professionalism of the senior leadership team had served to provide the capacity to accommodate, very successfully, the demands of several different school principals in recent years. The school, as a whole, had dealt well with this challenge and the teacher teams, both as departments and year teams, had pulled together to maintain and reinforce the powerful school ethos which was based upon high expectations and mutual respect.

All members of the school community were strongly committed to continuous improvement and there were detailed procedures for self-evaluation and improvement planning. These procedures were exemplary and formed part of a bigger quality assurance process which was organised and administered by the school's parent company. The systems were based upon careful and continuous analysis of current performance as the basis for building plans for the future. A great deal of work had taken place in addressing the recommendations contained in the previous inspection report, resulting in a quality of teaching that was of a high and consistent standard in nearly every department. The school had worked hard to address the shortcomings identified in the previous report in respect of Islamic Education and Arabic, but the measures taken had yet to have an impact upon the quality of teaching and learning and the students' attainment and progress in these subjects.

Partnerships with parents were outstanding and links with the local Dubai community were good. The school had recently forged productive links with a local government school to the mutual benefit to all the students involved. The school had excellent communications with parents through electronic means and through the open-door policy adopted by school leaders; these communications were enhanced through regular parent information mornings. In these various ways parents were encouraged to become true partners, with the school, in their children's learning.

Arrangements for governance were good. The school and the senior leadership team were held fully accountable to the parent company through a thorough and well-documented performance management policy and procedure. However, there was at this time no representation within governance arrangements from all stakeholders.

The staffing facilities and resources were all of outstanding quality. Staff were well qualified with access to professional development opportunities according to their own personal and professional needs and the needs of the school. The facilities were excellent: classrooms were plentiful, spacious and well-maintained; resources for learning were similarly plentiful and of good quality. There was an excellent and well-stocked library and extensive computer and other information and communication technology facilities throughout the school both in suites and in every classroom.

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 is the students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good is the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Not Applicable

How good is the students' attainment and progress in English?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Good	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Good

How good is the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good is the students' attainment and progress in science?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good is the students' personal and social development?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are teaching and learning?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Good	Good

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

How well does the school protect and support students?		
Age group:	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding

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

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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