

## INSPECTION REPORT

### Jumeirah English Speaking School - Arabian Ranches

Report published in April 2013

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Jumeirah English Speaking School - Arabian Ranches

Location	Arabian Ranches
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jess.sch.ae
Telephone	04 3619019
Address	PO Box 24942, Arabian Ranches, Dubai
Principal	Robert David Stokoe
Curriculum	UK/IB
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / Foundation Stage to Year 13
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	1362
Students' nationalities	UK
Number of Emirati students	11 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	8th to 11th October 2012

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## The context of the school

The Jumeirah English Speaking School (JESS), Arabian Ranches is located in an estate of that name and served the local area and beyond. It is a not-for-profit school and is linked to its sister school in Al Safa, also called Jumeirah English Speaking School. Both schools had the same Director of Education and Board of Governors.

The school catered for students aged from three, at the start of the Foundation Stage, to those aged 18 years in Year 13. Less than one per cent of the students were Emiratis.

The school offered the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, followed by the English National Curriculum to the end of Key Stage 4, when students sat the General Certificate of Education (GCSE). Students in the sixth form followed the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP).

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Outstanding

## Key strengths

- This ambitious school had built on its many strengths and successfully addressed its very few weaknesses;
- It had maintained outstanding levels of attainment, rates of progress and students' personal development;
- Students benefited from outstanding teaching, learning and assessment and an innovative curriculum;
- The school took outstanding care of all its students;
- Leaders, managers and teachers sustained a happy and challenging learning environment.

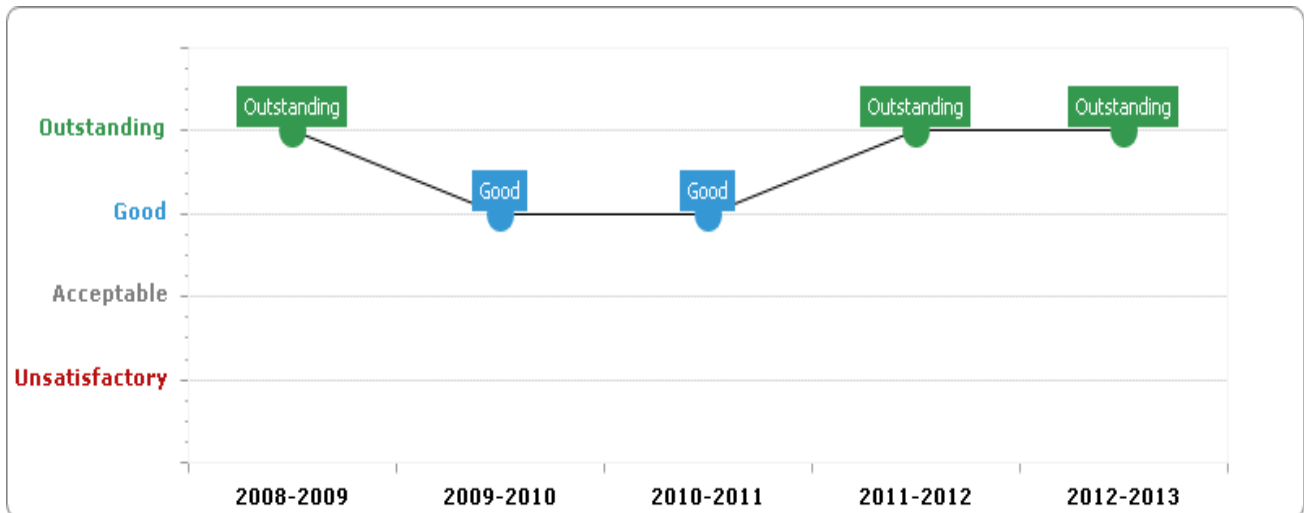
## Recommendations

- Ensure that improvements in teaching, learning and assessment of Arabic are consistently embedded in the relevant phases to promote good attainment and progress;
- Implement progress tracking procedures to improve the transition between primary and secondary in non-key subjects;
- Strengthen the existing structured support for careers guidance and university admission procedures.

## Progress since the last inspection

- The school had made good progress on improving what it provided in Islamic Education and Arabic and this was already evident in terms of student outcomes.

## Trend of overall performance



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
<b>Islamic Education</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
<b>Arabic as a first language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Arabic as an additional language</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable	Not Applicable
<b>Progress</b>	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Not Applicable
<b>English</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Mathematics</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
<b>Science</b>				
<b>Attainment</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
<b>Progress</b>	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Outstanding
Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment was mostly outstanding. In Islamic Education and Arabic, it varied between good and acceptable and had improved since the previous inspection. Strengths in Islamic Education included a good understanding of the Five Pillars of Islam and the Muslim way of life. However, older Muslim students' recitation skills and their understanding of Shariah and Fiqh needed further improvement. In Arabic, speaking and listening skills were developing well but writing skills were weaker. In English, extended writing was a strength and showed a range of vocabulary, complex structures and accurate grammar. Discussions were well argued. Problem solving and using and applying mathematics were strong features of students' attainment, as were proficiency in compound interest and linear equations. In science, students showed curiosity from an early stage and independently gathered relevant information. Older students had highly developed research skills.

Students' progress was mostly outstanding. It had improved to good in Islamic Education in the primary years and Arabic as an additional language. Students were making good progress in understanding the morals of Islam and made overall good progress in pronunciation. Although progress remained acceptable in Arabic as a first language, there had been improvement in secondary reading skills. The school's strong emphasis on collaborative group work was a major factor in accelerating progress. This was evident in the rapid development of note-taking and drafting skills in English, the application of numeracy skills in mathematics and in critical thinking skills in science. Most students with special educational needs made good progress and a significant minority made outstanding progress.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students were few in number but fully integrated into the life of the school. Their attainment and progress were good overall and there was evidence of recent high achievement. Emirati students had abilities in line with others when they started school and made generally good progress over time in the key subjects. Most had well developed English speaking skills but their writing skills were developing at a slower rate. Their progress in Arabic was at least acceptable and sometimes good. Attendance was outstanding, as was punctuality. This reflected attitudes to school that were similar to other students but a few girls lacked confidence in taking part in class discussions. Students' overall engagement in lessons was outstanding and they applied themselves well. Their work was assessed accurately and reports gave their parents a clear view of their progress. The curriculum met their needs well because it reflected a respect for Emirati culture and traditions as well as meeting their academic needs. Parents were welcomed to information evenings, reporting sessions and social events. These were usually very well attended. Links with parents supported their children's learning well.

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

All aspects of students' personal and social development were outstanding. Students greatly enjoyed school and their behaviour was impeccable. Students played and worked happily together. There were excellent relationships between all members of the school community. Students in all phases understood the need for healthy lifestyles and eating habits. They exercised regularly. Attendance was outstanding and punctuality, both at the start of school and at the beginning of lessons, was excellent. Students had an excellent understanding of Islamic values and their impact on the modern society in Dubai. They respected and understood very well the local traditions and heritage. They had a very strong appreciation of their own culture, the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and of other cultures around the world. Across phases, students showed an impressive level of loyalty and commitment to their school. They valued the role of the School Council and were keen to participate. Students co-operated well and willingly assisted each other, both informally and through structured support systems, such as peer counselling. Students actively engaged in a number of fund-raising programmes for charity, including support for a local special school.

[View judgements](#)

## How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

Teaching for effective learning was outstanding in all phases. Most teachers created a rich and supportive environment based on mutual respect where learning was the priority. Their subject expertise inspired students and helped them to grow in confidence and achieve well. A variety of purposeful and practical activities were planned to excite and motivate students and to cater for the range of learning styles and abilities. High quality resources, including technology, were used imaginatively to enrich learning, enabling students to deepen their understanding of abstract concepts. Skilled teachers facilitated learning when lesson time was spent mainly researching, discovering, applying learning to new situations and solving problems. Teachers' questioning skills in most lessons promoted thinking at a high level. Teaching seen in art, drama, economics, humanities, music and physical education was mostly outstanding and further enriched students' learning experiences.

The quality of students' learning was outstanding in all phases. Students respected their teachers and appreciated their hard work and their range of teaching styles. They saw a clear purpose to learning beyond the classroom and could make learning connections across the curriculum. Their mature attitudes enabled them to give and accept constructive feedback and reflect on their learning as a means of improving. They were confident in asking for clarification and on occasion formulating their own questions to explore and research further. Developing the skills for learning was a priority in most lessons. Most students could work well independently and demonstrated resilience. They especially enjoyed working in

teams sharing ideas. They supported and challenged each other in equal measure and became increasingly critical in their thinking.

Assessment of learning was outstanding in all phases. As children started Foundation Stage, their knowledge, skills and understanding were informally assessed. This information was used to plan activities to cater for the range of needs and interests and to enable students to make progress from their starting points. Throughout Foundation Stage, primary and secondary phases, students' achievements were monitored and rates of progress tracked in the key subjects. Information was shared between teachers and phases to ensure continuity and progression from year to year. Most teachers used this information effectively and expectations in lessons were high. Skilled questioning was used to assess understanding before moving on. Teachers provided verbal and written feedback and, on occasion, photographic evidence to celebrate achievement and identify areas for improvement. End of year assessments were analysed at the year group and individual student levels and used to review the curriculum to better meet the needs of all students.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school provided an outstanding curriculum. Meticulous documentation revealed a comprehensive, coherent curriculum that embodied the school's values. Innovative cross-curricular work, particularly in the primary and secondary years, was a conspicuous feature in many classes. An extensive review system, supported by professional development, showed the school's commitment to cater for all students' educational needs. Modifications catered for the needs of students with a range of learning difficulties. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities added significant value to the school's educational offering. The teaching and learning approaches required for the Diploma had a positive effect on curriculum development in lower phases, resulting in an increasing focus on harnessing students' natural curiosity. Activity-based learning and collaboration were fundamental to nearly all subjects. Senior students were prepared for the world after school through counselling and activities such as the Enterprise Club. Students had a sense of community through involvement in activities such as fund-raising and environmental activities.

[View judgements](#)

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

Health and safety systems and procedures were outstanding in all phases. All who worked in the school took their shared responsibility seriously. Staff members were vigilant around school at all times. Buildings, grounds and gardens were secure and exceptionally well cared for. Maintenance staff and students alike took pride in their surroundings. School traffic was well controlled and buses were appropriately supervised. Emergency and medical records were in order. Medical staff made a significant contribution to promoting and monitoring students' health and welfare. Healthy lifestyles were actively promoted. All staff and students knew what to do if they had a concern for a student's well-being.

Students were supported in an outstanding manner. Relationships between staff and students were positive and based on mutual respect and trust. Students were valued and cared for as unique individuals. Expectations for behaviour were clearly understood and students rarely needed intervention because they enjoyed school. Consequently, they were almost always on time for lessons and attendance was outstanding. Although there were good systems for careers guidance and advice on university entry, they needed enhancing as the number of older students increased.

[View judgements](#)

## How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

The school welcomed students of all abilities although it was not designed to allow wheelchair access. An experienced inclusion team worked with staff to provide appropriate guidance in identifying and supporting students with special educational needs. A wide range of screening tests were used to assess specific areas of need. A wealth of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), was also available to enhance learning and understanding. Reasonable and appropriate adjustments were made to help them overcome any barriers to learning. Parents were consulted and involved at all stages. Systems were such that students were supported not only in their academic studies, but also in their physical, social and emotional needs. Consequently, most students with special educational needs made good progress and a significant minority made outstanding progress.

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

All aspects of leadership and management were outstanding. Aspirational leaders had ensured that high academic standards had been maintained, showing the school's outstanding capacity to improve. The Headteachers of the school were relatively new appointments and, with the established Director, had secured the school's long-term vision. They were exceptionally well supported by middle-level leaders. The school team shared the same vision and educational values. Teamwork was evident in clear delegation with accountability and strong line management. Rigorous systems such as staff recruitment and support engendered common purpose. Clear communications encouraged high expectations and very professional relationships.

The school's evaluation of itself was accurate. The senior leadership team ensured that the last inspection report's recommendation was thoroughly evaluated and acted on. Consequently, the quality of teaching and students' progress had improved. The school improvement plan had the right priorities and was rigorously evaluated. Students' progress in the five key subjects was tracked and used to promote their further progress. It was not as closely tracked in other subjects. Routine monitoring of teaching and staff training ensured improvement in the overall teaching quality. Staff performance management informed the professional development programme well.

Parents were very closely involved with the school. Their views were taken fully into account through, for instance, their representation on the Governing Board and the JESS Parents Group. Parents were active helpers in the school and fund-raisers for school and charities. Communication networks ensured effective two-way dialogue and the school saw parents as partners. Reporting arrangements were excellent and students' progress was fostered by strong home-school links. The school had strong links with the community and other schools which broadened the curriculum and widened students' horizons.

The well-organised governors had a long term commitment to the school's development and used their skills to its benefit. Governors fully understood their roles and discharged them thoroughly. They played a dynamic role in setting the school's strategic direction and held the school to account through scrutiny of targets and outcomes. They acted promptly to support the school's response to the last report's recommendation.

The campus was very well maintained and had an excellent range of well-designed buildings, with new areas for better sixth form provision and others being erected. The newly appointed operations manager efficiently oversaw site maintenance and safety.

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Resources were regularly reviewed and updated. The ICT equipment, libraries and specialist areas were very well used. The staff were well qualified and benefited from a full programme of continuing professional development. Resources were managed very effectively and fully supported the curriculum.

[View judgements](#)

## What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	316	33%
	Last year	199	15%
Teachers	46		33%
Students	47		15%

\*The percentage of responses from parents is based on the number of families.

Minorities of parents and teachers responded to their surveys; only a few students responded to theirs. Students and parents thought that good progress was made in the key subjects, but there was concern from a minority of students over their progress in Arabic. Parents and students liked the school and along with teachers felt that behaviour was good, reflecting a good understanding of Islamic values. While teachers thought that students were actively involved in Dubai community projects, students and parents were less convinced. Teachers thought that the school provided well for Emirati students. There was general agreement that teaching was good, and students enjoyed a wide curriculum choice. The school was thought to be safe, and pastoral care and student guidance were good. Arrangements for students with special educational needs were thought to be effective, as was leadership. The school listened to stakeholders' opinions and while teachers were involved with decision-making, this was perhaps less true for students and parents. Parental links were thought to be good and there was a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of education. Parents and teachers indicated that the previous inspection report was accurate and had led to improvements.



## What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

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## 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)

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