

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Dubai English Speaking School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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## GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Dubai English Speaking School

Location	Oud Metha
Type of school	Private
Website	www.dessdubai.com
Telephone	04-3371457
Address	PO Box 2002, Dubai
Principal	David Hammond
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-11 / Foundation Stage to Year 6
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	838
Students' nationalities	UK
Number of Emirati students	7 (1%)
Date of the inspection	15th to 17th October 2012

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## The context of the school

Dubai English Speaking School was founded in 1963 and is situated in Oud Metha. It is a private school providing education for students aged four to 11 years, from Foundation Stage to Year 6. The school follows the English National Curriculum for most subjects and the Ministry of Education curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic.

At the time of the inspection, there were 838 students, of whom a very few were Emirati. Most students were from the United Kingdom but a significant number of nationalities made up the rest of the school population. Students were grouped into five classes in each year group. There were 54 full-time and 14 part-time teachers. Most teachers were British and were suitably qualified. The Headteacher was in his eighth year in post.

## Overall school performance 2012-2013

Good

## Key strengths

- The outstanding attainment in English, mathematics and science;
- Students' very good behaviour and work ethic, and high self-confidence;
- Some outstanding examples of classroom practice which exemplified a productive partnership between learner and teacher;
- The very good partnership with parents;
- The high level of commitment of leaders and teachers and the school's capacity to continue to improve.

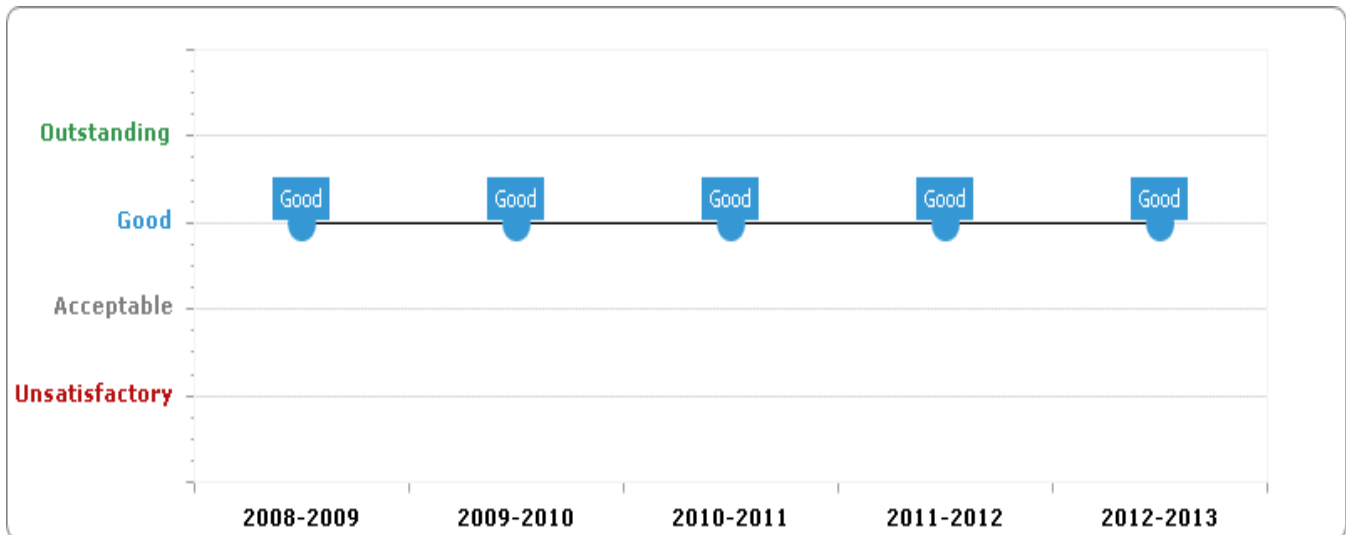
## Recommendations

- Continue to improve attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Work towards a full consistency of learning experience across all classes;
- Continue to develop middle managers as leaders for learning.

## Progress since the last inspection

- Progress in science in the Foundation Stage had risen to outstanding;
- Although teaching and learning remained good overall, there were some outstanding examples of teaching for effective learning;
- Changes in the senior leadership team and the new management structure were proving very effective in the school's development;
- Initiatives used by senior leaders, such as action research and coaching, underpinned the school's significant capacity for improvement.

## Trend of overall performance



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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Good

[Read paragraph](#)



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and Safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of Support	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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

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

[Read paragraph](#)

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

Students' attainment in English, mathematics and science was outstanding in both phases. It was acceptable in primary in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language, and unsatisfactory in Arabic as an additional language. In Islamic Education, Muslim students were able to relate their learning to their own lives, but some aspects of their Qur'an recitation were underdeveloped, particularly in the upper grades. In Arabic as a first language, most students were not confident enough in using standard Arabic independently to communicate in writing and speaking. In Arabic as an additional language, most students lacked confidence in speaking and writing without support. Students across the school were fluent and articulate in English. Primary phase students had a high level of conversational skills and could write for varied purposes. In mathematics, students could use their knowledge to calculate and solve problems in a variety of contexts, including real-life applications. In science, by the end of primary, students had excellent skills in practical and investigative work.

Students' progress was good in English, mathematics and primary science. It was outstanding in Foundation Stage science. It was acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic. Progress in Islamic Education was more limited in the lower and middle years. In Arabic as a first language, students showed insufficient confidence for their age in using standard Arabic in dialogues. Students of Arabic as an additional language made variable progress in key skills. In English, students showed the best progress in reading. For their age, students in mathematics demonstrated well-developed number and problem-solving skills. Students developed effective scientific skills of observation from an early stage. By Year 6, they were particularly strong in their understanding of scientific testing.

[View judgements](#)

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

The Emirati students were very well integrated into the school. Their overall attainment and progress were broadly good in English, mathematics and science, but acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic. Their attendance was in line with the rest of the school and their engagement in lessons was as positive as their peers. Their school reports were regular, detailed and focused well on the individuals' progress and next steps. Emirati parents were very effectively involved with their children's education.

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

Across the school, students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. They were polite, respectful, well behaved and demonstrated high levels of support to each other. They took on roles and responsibilities willingly and responded well to staff. Most students demonstrated an understanding of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and made choices accordingly. They could discuss the impact of unhealthy lifestyles and give examples. Attendance in the primary was good and outstanding in the Foundation Stage. Students demonstrated a good understanding of Islamic values and a sound local, cultural and global awareness. Children across the school took the initiative in Islamic greetings and demonstrated good knowledge of some of the Islamic and local traditions. Students could talk about main developments in Dubai in the last 40 years. They attributed the flourishing success of Dubai to the harmony that exists between the wide range of nationalities and cultures in Dubai. They felt they had a voice through the students' council and were able to give examples of their achievements. Students willingly completed their work to the best of their ability and took pride in their roles and responsibilities. They were able to talk about a range of community and environment projects in which they participated over the year. They participated in schemes and projects that promoted local conservation of water and recycling within the school.

[View judgements](#)

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

The overall quality of teaching was good, with some clearly outstanding learning experiences, but equally some which could be improved. Highlights of teaching included the quality of lesson planning which was thorough and often imaginative. Teachers shared clear and appropriate objectives with students. They chose a range of activities that offered variety in lessons and engaged students' interest. Most teachers managed their lessons well, balancing explanation with active student participation. In some lessons, however, students spent too long as passive learners. Strong relationships, high expectations and a genuine learning partnership were the features of the very best practice. Teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic continued to improve, although expectations were still too low and questions not sufficiently challenging. Most teachers offered different levels of work to suit students' abilities, but the highest attaining students did not always have sufficient challenge. Teaching in other subjects was good overall, but of more varied quality than that in the main subjects. Practice was particularly strong in classes in humanities, music and information and communication technology. Specialist teaching was successful when teachers knew the classes well and set appropriately challenging activity, but this was not always the case.

Learning was good across the school. Students showed enthusiasm and responded well to the school's encouragement to show resilience in their work. They demonstrated a capacity to take responsibility for

their learning both individually and collaboratively. Good quality dialogue between teachers and students enabled them to raise awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses as learners and to understand their next steps. Older students in particular showed a readiness to think critically, but the opportunities to do so varied between classes.

Systems for assessing and monitoring students' work were thorough and extensive. The school carefully tracked students' progress over time to identify any student who needed support or extension. Senior staff were adept at understanding students' progress through analysis of performance data. In the Foundation Stage, daily records, notes and photos painted a detailed picture of the skills and understanding being developed. Teachers regularly monitored how well students were progressing during lessons and gave them good feedback. Marking was mostly useful to students and pointed out where to go next. Assessment information guided staff in their lesson planning, but teachers did not ensure that they fully challenged those who had demonstrated high prior attainment. Assessment in science was not yet consistent across teachers. In Islamic Education and Arabic, recently established systems had not been fully embedded. Progress reports to parents were detailed and highly individual.

[View judgements](#)

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

Senior leaders placed a very high priority on curriculum development and had established a very clear rationale for the curriculum, based on meeting students' needs. As a result, the curriculum was broad, balanced and relevant, with a thematic approach that included excellent opportunities for linking learning to everyday life in a very wide range of learning contexts. There was appropriate progression with very well planned arrangements for ensuring smooth transition from one phase to the next. Senior leaders had put in place very clear systems for reviewing and modifying the curriculum, with clear responsibilities allocated for this process. Cross-curricular links were emphasised and tracked, supporting the thematic approach. Enrichment activities, booster classes and a wide range of extra-curricular activities provided very good support for, and extension of, learning. The curriculum in Arabic had been improved, with more age-appropriate challenge, although this was not always the case in all lessons. Guidance to support the different aspects of Arabic was underdeveloped. Cross-curricular themes were not always clear enough in English.

[View judgements](#)

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

There were very thorough systems, processes and record-keeping arrangements to safeguard the health and well-being of students. A doctor and other medical professionals visited the school, as required. The school environment was in excellent condition, was well maintained, clean and secure. Students were well supervised before, during and after school. The school strongly endorsed a healthy lifestyle, with regular activities, promotions and extensive sports activities involving many students.

Staff monitored and acted on issues that arose with students. There was adequate provision for child protection, although not all staff were fully familiar with the child protection policy and arrangements. Strong staff-student rapport was a highly evident feature of the school and classrooms. Staff knew students' personal needs well and responded accordingly. Teachers were positive role-models, resulting in respectful and well-behaved students. Teachers offered students helpful advice and guidance at appropriate times. Attendance and punctuality were promoted well but full attendance remained an issue.

[View judgements](#)

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

Early identification of students with special educational needs was a routine part of the school's processes when a child was admitted to the school. There were expectations that teachers would identify specific needs of students and they were given appropriate advice and guidance to do this. However, not all teachers were aware of how students with special educational needs made progress, and therefore did not always provide appropriate support in classrooms. The quality of learning and progress in withdrawal classes was excellent, with a strong focus on setting targets, offering focused support and overall meeting students' needs. All students with special educational needs had good individual educational plans.

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

The highly professional senior leadership team was clearly committed to the school, was ambitious in its thinking and planning and demonstrated a clear vision of the school's future development. A key component was to develop and coach teachers to make a full contribution to whole school improvement as leaders for learning. They had placed emphasis on empowering middle leaders. The introduction of a new phase head structure was already instrumental in enabling senior leaders to be more strategic in leading whole school change. The role of middle leaders was developing momentum but not all of them consistently fulfilled their key responsibilities. The school had a clear capacity to continue to improve.

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Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

The school had put in place a good range of methods for reviewing its work. The focus on improving individual teacher performance through performance management and individual objective-setting was effective. Classroom observations by leaders, both formal and informal, took place regularly. The school's self-evaluation report was comprehensive but not consistently evaluative enough. The three-year strategic plan and the one-year improvement plan offered a broad set of objectives, but senior leaders did not translate these into clear enough steps for action for middle leaders and teachers. The school had made good progress in addressing all of the recommendations of the previous report.

The partnership with parents was outstanding. The school involved them very effectively in the life of the school and kept them very well informed. A particular strength was parents' involvement in their child's learning through information about programmes of work, very detailed reports on progress and opportunities to learn in class with their child. There was very good involvement of students in the local and wider community through field trips, involvement in festivals and a range of charity fund-raising projects. The school welcomed a range of visitors from the community to extend students' learning.

The Governing Board had a very positive partnership with the school. It had responded well to the recommendations of the last report. It had clearly reflected on how best to balance its role as supporter and critical friend and how to achieve a better involvement of parents. There were clear opportunities for the school to keep the governors fully informed, and for the Board to hold it accountable. The Board had increased parents' opportunities to meet with them.

The day-to-day management of the school was very efficient. The arrival of a bursar and the new middle management structure were already influencing the school's development significantly. Teachers were suitably qualified and there was a very good balance of experience. The school placed a clear emphasis on building leadership capacity. The premises were outstanding and provided a stimulating learning environment. The campus was spacious and the buildings well maintained. The library was a very well-resourced facility.

[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	276	32%
	Last year	212	24%
Teachers	18		26%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

Almost all parents were satisfied with the quality of education and thought that their child enjoyed school. They stated that teaching and learning were good and that most teachers made sure their child knew how to improve. They agreed that their child was valued and respected. They judged that the school was well led and most thought that school leaders listened to their opinions. A few thought that communication with parents and their involvement in decision-making could be improved. Teachers' comments about the school were very positive. All thought that the school was well led and that leaders listened to their opinions. They had the support they needed to ensure students made good progress in lessons. They thought that students used a wide range of technology to support their learning. They agreed that students were valued and respected in the school. Most thought that the school welcomed students with special educational needs.

## 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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