

INSPECTION REPORT

Jumeirah English Speaking School

Report published in May 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Jumeirah English Speaking School

Location	Al Safa
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jess.sch.ae
Telephone	04 3945515
Address	PO Box 24942 Jumeirah, Dubai
Principal	Ruth Mary Burke
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-11 / Foundation Stage to Year 6
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	704
Number of Emirati students	5 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 24th to Wednesday 26th October 2011

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The context of the school

Jumeirah English Speaking School opened in 1976 and is situated in Al Safa. At the time of the inspection there were 704 students on roll, aged three to 11 years. The school follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and the English National Curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2. The nationalities of the students were mixed, with 42 different countries represented. The majority of them were British. Around 20 per cent of students were second language learners of English.

There were 50 full-time teachers, including the principal and seven part-time teachers. All teachers were well-qualified and deployed effectively to support learning. The teaching team included an experienced team of 17 teaching assistants who supported learning. There was a skilled administrative team which ensured the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis. The additional learning needs co-ordinator and teachers ensured early identification and support for students with special educational needs (SEN).

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Outstanding

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The school continued to provide an outstanding quality of education within an ethos of continuous improvement and shared responsibility. The quality of leadership of the school was outstanding, with all leaders pursuing excellent outcomes for the students. Student leadership was a common feature of lessons and activities with high levels of independence and initiative shown by students of all ages. This was evident in the 'buddy' system which enabled students of different ages to learn collaboratively and older students to provide peer teaching opportunities to younger ones.

Attainment and progress were outstanding overall, with students of all ages achieving consistently high levels in English, mathematics and science; progress for all groups of students was at least good. A concerted effort to improve teaching in Arabic and Islamic Education had begun to impact on attainment in Years 1 to 4 and progress in these subjects had improved overall. Lessons across the range of subjects were mostly characterised by independent and collaborative learning experiences for students, with excellent use of information communications technology (ICT) by students and teachers. Thorough self-evaluation processes were embedded in the life of the school and were used to identify issues for further

improvement. New initiatives were well-planned to ensure maximum impact upon student outcomes. The involvement of students in feedback about teaching and learning contributed significantly to this process.

Key strengths

- Outstanding attainment in English, mathematics and science through high levels of enquiry, research and investigative learning;
- Outstanding attitudes and behaviour which led to independence and well-developed leadership skills in students of all ages;
- Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment which met the needs of all age groups, achieved through a skills-based curriculum;
- Abundant and stimulating learning resources including ICT, used creatively by students and teachers;
- Outstanding leadership at all levels.

Recommendations

- Continue to develop teaching, learning and the use of assessment information in order to further raise attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Further develop strategies to challenge high attaining students across all subjects.

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

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

Students' attainment was outstanding in English, mathematics and science. In all three subjects, most students achieved at levels well above international expectations. For example, in English, early reading

and writing skills were well-developed from Foundation Stage and, by Year 6, students wrote in a wide range of genres for specific purposes, often using sophisticated language structures and literary devices. In mathematics, problem solving was a key feature of learning and consequently, students were able to carry out investigations independently and apply their understanding to real-life contexts. In science, investigations skills were well-developed and students explained and recorded their hypotheses, observations and analyses well at all levels. Attainment was acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic and overall, with higher attainment for additional language learners than those learning Arabic as a first language. Students in Years 1 to 4 attained higher levels than older students in all aspects of the language with a few attaining in these lower classes at good levels. Most students also attained at levels above international expectations in other subjects such as physical education, ICT, music, arts and humanities.

Students' progress in English, mathematics and science was outstanding across the school. Against the English National Curriculum standards and using international benchmarks, students made better than expected progress in these subjects. There were marginal differences in the progress of boys and girls with boys making slightly better progress in mathematics and girls surpassing boys in English. In science, there were no discernible differences in progress between the gender groups. Progress in Arabic and Islamic Education was good overall with younger students making more rapid progress than older students in Arabic. In almost all lessons, levels of progress in knowledge, skills and understanding were extremely high across almost all subjects. Students identified as having special educational needs made better than expected progress in most subjects with a few making outstanding progress in mathematics, science and other areas of the curriculum.

Emirati students achieved at similar levels to their peers in almost all areas and attainment for these students was mostly outstanding in English, mathematics and science, whereas it was acceptable in Islamic Education and Arabic. Emirati students also made similar progress to other students across the wider curriculum.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Outstanding	Outstanding
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

Students' behaviour and attitudes were outstanding and were matched by high levels of attendance and punctuality. Relationships with peers and adults were very strong. Students showed initiative and took responsibility in various ways but specifically through the 'buddy' system. Excellent student leadership was shown in the charities committee and eco-club among other groups. Students understood about healthy living and acted on the excellent advice given through sensible diet and exercise. Almost all students displayed a detailed understanding of local traditions and of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai. Knowledge of Islam was good overall. Almost all students demonstrated excellent civic responsibility through school and community projects, links with other schools, organising charity events leading on environmental initiatives. Students had very clear ideas about Dubai, its history and development and how it had gained its place in the world economy. Similarly, they showed outstanding knowledge of local and global environmental issues such as conservation, recycling, countering pollution and alternative power sources. Students spoke confidently about how they would minimise Dubai's 'carbon footprint.'

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

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

Teaching for effective learning was outstanding in both phases. In almost all lessons, teachers had secure knowledge of how students learned which led to students making good or better progress. Every classroom was a vibrant and welcoming learning environment further enriched with displays about Dubai, its heritage and language. This was also a safe environment where students could think, reflect, make mistakes and grow. High quality lesson plans included clear objectives, expected learning outcomes and success criteria which were communicated effectively to secure progress in learning. In some Islamic Education and Arabic lessons however, activities were not always effectively planned to ensure students made the expected progress. Time was managed well and in all lessons, with plenary sessions used mostly well to review and consolidate learning. Skillful use of targeted questions was instrumental in checking for understanding and challenging the more able. This was a feature requiring further development across the curriculum. In almost all lessons, teachers were catalysts and facilitators of learning; students were expected to collaborate, support each other and yet be independent thinkers and responsible learners.

The quality of learning was outstanding. Students collaborated well, shared resources responsibly and often supported each other's learning. They were confident young individuals who knew when to celebrate achievements, evaluate the quality of their own and other's work and ask for support if need be. The peer teaching opportunities between Year 2 and Year 6 students afforded by the 'buddy system' had elevated the learning experience for both groups. The younger students were learning through modeling by older students who in turn saw it as a responsibility to exhibit the best of the JESS's 'learning to learn' characteristics. As independent and responsible learners, students of all ages were confidently able to discuss their learning and did so regularly with the senior leadership team during 'Have your Say' meetings. Through effective use of the abundant resources, students found out things for themselves and applied their learning to broader, real life, contexts.

Assessment had improved overall and was outstanding in both phases. Well-established and effective methods were in place to collect and record assessment data which was systematically and thoroughly analysed, across all subjects. Tracking and evaluating students' progress was therefore highly effective. Data was often further analysed to identify trends in attainment such as those related to gender, nationality, or additional language acquisition. Ongoing assessment was embedded as an integral part of teaching and learning in every lesson. All teachers monitored students' progress and almost all gave constructive and useful oral feedback to improve outcomes. Assessment analysis was used well to support identify and support students who were not making expected progress. This information was used effectively by most teachers to plan appropriate activities and for curriculum modifications, as needed. Highly effective marking was used in almost all subjects to ensure students knew exactly how to improve their learning.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

The curriculum, based on the English National curriculum was outstanding with a clear rationale and excellent breadth and balance. All students participated in a wide range of exciting creative, practical experiences. Effective progression from year to year ensured students were well prepared for the transition both within and beyond the school. Choice was a key feature in all lessons as was investigation, research and enquiry. The excellent range of enrichment activities such as the book club, sport and various student committees provided further challenge in terms of student voice and leadership. The embedding of 'learning to learn' skills within the curriculum, had a significant impact on progress. The curriculum was extremely well planned to meet the needs of all learners. Review of the curriculum was continuous, involved all members of the learning community and often led to improved outcomes for students. Recent initiatives in ICT added a further dimension and enabled 'mobile' and independent learning for students of all ages. Cross-curricular and learning links were embedded throughout the curriculum. This element was exceptional in Foundation Stage with every moment of learning linked to another, thus enabling excellent connections to be made by young children which accelerated their progress.

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

Arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of all students were outstanding with all staff giving high priority to students' well-being and safety. A very strong emphasis on ensuring a healthy lifestyle was developed from Foundation Stage and involved medical and PE staff working closely with students. Support and guidance was exemplary and supervision levels high but not intrusive so that students gained independence rapidly. The school had robust arrangements for addressing child protection issues.

The quality of support for all students was also outstanding and manifested in superb relationships and high levels of trust between all members of the learning community. High expectations and skilful management of behaviour was a strength and supported excellent behaviour. There were comprehensive arrangements to identify, support and challenge students who had additional learning needs. Similarly, there were rigorous, well understood and effective systems to secure outstanding attendance. Every student was well-cared for and guided skilfully to achieve their best.

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

The quality of leadership in the school was outstanding with all leaders showing a dynamic and relentless pursuit of excellence to ensure outstanding outcomes for the students. Incisive direction from the Principal and school leaders had ensured all staff and students were clear about the professional expectations, procedures and systems in the school. The ethos of excellence pervaded every area of the school. The leadership of the school was widely distributed and harnessed the talent and expertise of all staff members thus empowering leaders at all levels including student leaders. Consequently, there was a shared feeling of accountability. High quality student leadership was also a key feature of the school with even the youngest child able to lead ideas and other children well.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning had continued to improve and was now outstanding with middle managers using data effectively to pin-point areas for improvement and well-chosen initiatives being implemented consistently by almost all teachers. This meant that accurate self-evaluation processes were now embedded in the everyday life in the school. All members of the staff team were involved in evaluating the school. Accurate data supported evaluations and analysis of this data had led to high quality professional development. Performance management was a regular and established feature of school life and had impacted positively on students' attainment and progress in key subjects. The result of actions taken to improve Islamic Education and Arabic were successful, although it was recognised that further work still needed to be done. School leaders had fully implemented initiatives to address the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

The involvement of parents in learning and the life of the school was outstanding and central to the school's success. The parents' group assisted in all aspects of school development and several parents supported learning in classes and clubs on a voluntary basis. Individual parents and Board members had contributed significantly to the development of the premises to create a very desirable learning

environment. Verbal and written communications between school and home were at an exceptionally high level of quality and led to almost all parents feeling empowered and totally involved in their children's learning and progress. This involvement impacted directly and positively on student attainment, progress and personal development.

The board held the school leaders to account and ensured high quality resources were available. This group was representative of the school and local community and had developed excellent monitoring systems which ensured every initiative was evaluated in terms of student outcomes. This group contributed to the maintenance and improvement of learning zones within the school which led to a sense of 'community.' The board members recognised a need to share their annual report with parents to ensure greater transparency. The links between the board and the senior leadership team were excellent and benefitted students and teachers greatly.

The school was exceptionally well managed with every member of the community contributing to the day-to-day harmony. Excellent administrative practices ensured high quality communication between the school and families and other stakeholders. The school premises were well used for learning and the facilities were also used regularly by community groups and other providers. Staffing levels were high and all members were well-qualified and deployed effectively to support learning. Expertise in specific areas ensured subjects such as PE, ICT and music were taught at a high level. Well trained teaching assistants provided excellent support to students and teachers. The developments in ICT infrastructure and resources had resulted in a dramatic increase of students applying technology to their learning.

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	216	54%
	Last year	254	64%
Teachers	16		32%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

About half of the parents responded to the survey. Most parents were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciated the accessibility of teachers and leaders and valued the excellent communications about their children's progress. Almost all felt that standards were high with highest levels of satisfaction relating to English, mathematics and science. A small minority were less pleased with progress in Islamic Education and Arabic. Parents saw the key strengths as teaching and learning, the enjoyment levels and good behaviour of students. A majority of teachers thought that inspections had led to improvements in the school.

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.

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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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