

Delhi Private School, Dubai Inspection Report

Kindergarten to Grade 12

Report issued January 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.

Delhi Private School was inspected in November 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 Jebel Ali, Delhi Private School is a private school providing education for students from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12. The school follows the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum. Of the 252 teachers at the school, 90 had joined the staff between March and November 2009. At the time of the inspection, there were 2,629 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable overall and good or better in Grades 6, 8 and 10.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents were pleased with the school. They commented positively regarding the ready access they had to teachers via the internet, e-mails, mobile phones and face to face appointments. They felt that this was an outstanding feature of the school. They were also particularly pleased that the school encouraged both the personal and academic development of their children. However, a few parents felt that they were not consulted often enough and a few considered that their children were given too much homework.

How well does the school perform overall?

Delhi Private School provided a good quality of educational overall for students. The attainment and progress of students in the secondary phase was better than in KG or primary grades, although in key subjects it was always at least acceptable and sometimes better throughout the school. Performance of students at examinations at Grades 10 and 12 were in line or better than those in similar schools in India. Students' attitudes and behaviour were good and positive relationships prevailed throughout

the school. Attendance was acceptable and students arrived punctually for school and for lessons. They showed a high regard for Islam, had an excellent understanding of the multicultural nature of Dubai and were aware of how this enhanced their experience of living there. Their awareness of the global financial crisis and other local and global issues, such as water and energy conservation and pollution, was good.

The quality of teaching and learning was acceptable throughout the school. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and engaged their students well. The range of teaching strategies was limited, however, and did not consistently meet the needs of individual students: too few teachers enriched learning with activities beyond the given textbook. Most lessons, including mathematics and science, conveyed factual content and did not encourage learning through enquiry, prediction, observation or investigation. The quality of assessment was acceptable across the school. The overall quality of the curriculum was good and had certain outstanding features and the school's curriculum policy had a clear rationale for the entire school. The KG curriculum, aimed at supporting children's all-round development, was balanced and challenging. The extended curriculum in primary and secondary grades was supplemented with an extended co-curriculum, which provided balance and promoted cross-curricular activities. Arrangements for protecting students were outstanding. The school provided a safe, secure and positive educational environment for all students, thus fulfilling the school mission. Student guidance and counselling was provided to support students and parents when problems arose in academic studies or in social and emotional health.

The leadership and management of the school were good. School leaders worked hard to ensure that new teachers were inducted effectively. The school had a purposeful and vibrant ethos, which encouraged students' academic and personal development and promoted confidence in students from a very young age. There were robust processes in place for self-evaluation but the school management did not always use assessment data well enough to compare standards in the school with schools internationally. Subject leaders did not have enough influence over the development of their areas of responsibility. The school's partnership with parents and the community was good and many community links were promoted through extra-curricular activities. Productive links with parents also contributed to the good standards achieved by students. Parents were not represented in the governing body and therefore not involved in the formal decision making of the school. Governance of the school was good. Members demonstrated high levels of commitment and provided expertise in a wide range of fields. The governing board regularly held the school to account and performed its duties very effectively. The school was housed in good accommodation, which was well maintained and clean. The range and quality of resources was acceptable, overall, including an appropriate number of qualified teachers and a large number of support staff.

Key features of the school

- By the end of Grade 12 students' attainment was at least in line with or better than that seen in comparable schools;
- The school had a purposeful and vibrant ethos which promoted students' personal development and nurtured confidence in students from a young age;
- The age-related extended curriculum fostered the creative talents of students and enriched their learning;
- The quality of support for students, including their health and safety, was outstanding;
- The leadership has successfully addressed many of the issues related to its high staff turnover and this has ensured stability and continuity, from which school improvement has been able to continue;
- In too many lessons the range of teaching strategies was limited: teaching did not encourage learning through enquiry, prediction, observation or investigation;
- Subject leaders did not engage sufficiently in developing their subjects or guiding teachers in their work.

Recommendations

Improve teaching and learning by:

- planning work in lessons to match students' needs
- using information gathered through assessments to plan activities which provide the correct level of challenge for all students
- providing more opportunities for students to engage more actively in lessons and planning more imaginatively for students to develop skills such as cooperation, enquiry and investigation;

Increase the effectiveness of subject leaders to ensure that:

- teachers are better supported in understanding and meeting the school's expectations for students' attainment and progress
- the transfer of information about students' progress between teachers in different grades is more efficient, so that there is continuity of learning from one grade to another
- the impact of professional development on classroom practice is rigorously evaluated
- performance data from different subjects is used more effectively to compare standards at the school with those of other schools internationally.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were acceptable. Most students in Grades 1 to 8 had an acceptable knowledge of the principles of Islam. By Grade 5, students had memorised short chapters of The Holy Qur'an although most students in Grade 1 needed help in explaining the meaning of words in the verses. In Grades 9 to 12, most students were capable of reading short chapters of The Holy Qur'an; however, not all students applied recitation rules accurately.

Attainment and progress in Arabic were acceptable. By the end of Grade 3, most students could read the alphabet correctly. In Grades 6 to 8 students' writing was acceptable. By Grade 10, most students could make themselves understood but did not speak fluently; they could read short passages independently but their understanding of grammar was weak. Most students' progress in listening was good. Although students were making good progress in conducting discussions, most faced difficulty in speaking at length in Arabic.

Attainment and progress in English was acceptable in KG and primary and good in the secondary grades. Listening and speaking skills across the school were good, as most students were able to speak in English fluently and with the correct pronunciation and intonation. Even the youngest children were able to read and make presentations with a high degree of skill and confidence. Grammar was well understood and correctly used across the school. Most students were able to express their ideas in their own words in different situations. Imaginative and creative writing were more developed in Grades 9 to 12 than in Grades 1 to 8. These older students were able to apply their imagination and analyse prose and poetry with skill, showing a good understanding of the deeper meanings of what they had read.

Attainment and progress in mathematics was acceptable across the school. Children made good progress from their starting point in KG and could use numbers and shapes in class and in assembly. In Grade 2, the students successfully developed the concept of repeated addition as multiplication and, by Grade 5, they were able to calculate the area of irregular and composite shapes. Students in Grade 8 demonstrated acceptable competency: for example, they successfully used linear equations to find the square of large numbers such as 52. Most students in Grades 10 to 12 used mathematical principles and made links to other curriculum areas. For example, they designed a cover for a project using geometrical shapes and completed a physics project about radioactive decay by applying differential equations.

In science, the attainment of secondary students was good whereas it was acceptable for those in primary grades and KG. Children made good progress in KG, developing their natural curiosity and skills of enquiry including, for example, finding out about living things. By the end of Grade 8 students could interpret weather forecasts and explain the causes of diabetes and obesity. The factual information that students had learned was good but they lacked skills in scientific explanation and applying their knowledge. By Grade 10, students' attainment in physics was good. They could explain how wind energy was harnessed in windmills and wind farms. Grade 12 students' attainment in physics and chemistry was good and they ably made presentations on biodiversity. Critical thinking skills were not developed well enough throughout the primary and secondary grades.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good. They behaved politely and positive relationships prevailed throughout the school. All students, including the youngest, spoke confidently and with authority in assemblies. They exercised self-discipline and most could work in collaboration with others although, in some lessons, they were inattentive and restless. Students took on an increasing range of responsibilities and, in secondary grades, they demonstrated a high level of maturity and confidence. Attendance was acceptable and students arrived punctually for school and for lessons.

Students took part in inter-school events, sports and other cultural activities and the youngest enjoyed going to the parks. They spoke proudly of the facilities they enjoyed as a result of living in Dubai including, for example, the uninterrupted supply of water and electricity. They had a clear understanding of ways in which they might contribute to its future by becoming scientists, teachers or doctors. Students showed a high regard for Islam and, from KG onwards, were able to name some of the Pillars of Islam. Older students had a good understanding of feasts and Islamic expectations such as clothing requirements, prayer and fasting at Ramadan. They had an excellent understanding of the multicultural nature of Dubai and were aware of how this enhanced their experiences.

Students had an excellent understanding of how Dubai had developed in a short space of time and the impact it had on their lifestyles and the environment. They were also aware of the global financial crisis and its possible impact on people. Their awareness of local and global issues, such as water and energy conservation and pollution, was excellent and they actively cared for the environment by recycling and conserving energy and water at home and at school.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was acceptable throughout the school. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and engaged their students well, particularly those in KG and Grades 11 and 12. Interactions between teachers and students were good in most, and outstanding in a few, classes. At the start of lessons, most teachers made it clear to students what it was that they were expected to learn. However, too many teachers tended to take up much of the lesson time by speaking themselves. Although the majority made good use of dialogue and questions to involve the students, the quality of questioning did not always encourage students to think more critically or deeply. Many students gave brief answers to the teachers' questions and were not encouraged to develop their answers and explain their reasoning and how they had learned or reached a conclusion. Much of the teaching lacked imagination or sufficient means of stimulating students' interest. Too few teachers enriched learning with activities beyond those given in the textbook and work was not planned well enough to challenge the most able, or support the least able students. This was noted more in the primary classes than elsewhere. Few teachers used information and communication technology to enliven lessons or to encourage more active, practical learning.

The quality of students' learning was acceptable. Most were highly motivated and wanted to learn but the pace of their learning was not as fast as it could have been owing to a poor match of work to their ability or a lack of purpose in some activities. For example, interactions during group work in primary classes occasionally resulted in an ineffective use of time. Students in the secondary grades benefited through working collaboratively but this was not a feature of work in the primary classes.

Learning throughout the school was enhanced by the many opportunities offered to students outside lessons for relating their learning to everyday life. Students exhibited immense confidence in making presentations from which other students learned. Most lessons, including mathematics and science, conveyed factual content acceptably but did not encourage learning through enquiry, prediction, observation or investigation. Students' application of learning to the world around and making connections across subjects was weak.

The quality of assessment was acceptable. Student assessment was mostly in the form of tests and was not used effectively for improving their learning. Although the majority of teachers were aware of the students' strengths and weaknesses they did not use this knowledge to alter their teaching to match the learning needs of individuals. The quality of marking in students' workbooks was inconsistent and did not show students how they could improve.

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

The overall quality of the curriculum was good with some outstanding features. The school's curriculum policy had a clear rationale for the entire school. The KG curriculum, for example, was aimed at supporting the children's personal, social and academic development and it was balanced and challenging. The curriculum was regularly reviewed and planned to ensure that students made progressive steps in their learning between grades. Curricular links were planned well through themes and regular opportunities were provided for students to learn from the local community and environment. The curriculum for Grades 1 to 8 was supplemented with an extended co-curriculum, which provided balance and enabled students to make links in their learning between different subjects. These were seen in the form of fortnightly assemblies, which followed a common theme and drew their content from different subjects. The curriculum also included music, art and dance classes for Grades 1 to 4 and aesthetic clubs for Grades 5 to 8; students had a degree of choice within these subjects. The transition of students between the primary and secondary grades was planned well. The curriculum was clearly defined for Grades 9 to 12 by the requirements of the CBSE. Students chose to study commerce or science after Grade 10. Weekly activity classes for Grades 9 and 11 were having a significant impact on students' personal and social development and on their learning. In Grades 10 and 12 Board classes were exempted from these activities. A good range of projects including those promoting ecological awareness and charity drives enabled students to learn from the community and environment.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for the care and protection of students were outstanding. The school provided a safe, secure and positive educational environment for all students, thus fulfilling the school mission. The buildings and grounds were clean, bright and well maintained. The school had developed exemplary processes and procedures to ensure that students were safe whilst travelling to and from school and during their time at school. These processes were meticulously documented and regularly reviewed to ensure best practice. Fire drills and evacuation rehearsals were conducted and evaluated several times each term. Staff members were made clearly aware of their responsibilities regarding the

safety and well-being of students. Medical staff monitored the health of all students and those working in the clinic were pro-active in promoting a healthy lifestyle. The entire staff had been trained in, and were aware of, their responsibilities relating to child protection issues. Teachers and ancillary staff demonstrated care and concern for students and an ethos of mutual respect prevailed throughout the school.

Behaviour management was a shared responsibility across the school and students were supported in modifying behaviour when it was considered necessary. An excellent level of communication existed between the school and parents. The school tracked students' progress well; student guidance and counselling was provided to support students and parents when problems arose in academic studies or in social and emotional health. Students expressed confidence in the school counsellors. Guidance and advice was provided to assist students in making study and career choices. Attendance and punctuality were carefully monitored and, where concerns were recorded, these were followed up immediately.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership and management of the school were good. The realisation of the mission of the school was evident in all its work and it was driven by a clear sense of purpose shared by its staff and governing body. Recent examination results demonstrated the school's emphasis on academic excellence and the development of students' talents was promoted effectively through the core curriculum and extended curriculum. The school had a purposeful and vibrant ethos, which encouraged students' personal development and promoted their confidence from a very young age. The leadership of the Principal was dynamic and pro-active. Effective measures had been put in place to ensure that the risks related to such a high rate of staff turnover were mitigated. Thorough induction programmes were provided and clearly stated policies and procedures ensured that students experienced continuity and stability in an environment of change. The core senior team were competent and committed to the school but other senior and middle managers, such as subject leaders, were mainly new to their roles and responsibilities. Although the arrangements for the performance management of teachers was good and their professional development was high on the school's agenda, the influence of middle managers was not yet strong enough in guiding staff towards better classroom practice or the school's high aspirations for student achievement. Despite the school's meticulous curriculum planning, some class teachers were not always aware of what was taught in classes in the grades above or below their own.

The school's processes for self-evaluation had some good features including consultation with key stakeholders. Questionnaires were regularly sent to all members of the school community. Parental suggestions were considered and, when deemed appropriate, adopted. Teachers rated different aspects of the school annually and suggested areas for improvement. Those in leadership positions also completed self-analysis questionnaires regularly and new staff completed questionnaires. Monitoring reports were written by middle managers and presented to the Principal for attention but these showed insufficient focus on the impact of the extensive programme of professional

development on classroom practice. The school's analysis of data from different subjects was not used well to compare standards at the school with those of other schools internationally.

The school's partnership with parents and the community was good. Many community links were promoted through extra-curricular activities. Very good web-based communication systems were in place, allowing the parents e-mail access to teachers and the school and giving them information about the curriculum and the progress and welfare of their child. The parents interviewed valued these services above all others. Productive links with parents contributed to the good standards achieved by students. The parents considered the school's emphasis on the all round development of the child to be a strength of the school.

Governance of the school was good. There was a dual management system of governance with the whole governing body meeting twice a year and the management committee meeting up to four times each year. Members of both committees showed high levels of commitment and provided expertise in a wide range of fields, both locally and in the school's partner country, India. Their expertise included, amongst other professions, accountancy, law and education and the arts. The governing board regularly held the school to account for its performance and carried out its duties very effectively.

The school was housed in good accommodation, which was well maintained and clean. The range and quality of resources was acceptable, overall. The school had an acceptable number of qualified teachers and a large number of support staff.

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 Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

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

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

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

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?			
Age group:	Pre-Primary Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

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

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

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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