

Lycée Française International of Dubai Inspection Report

Report published May 2010

Contents

Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report	2
Basic information about the school.....	2
How well does the school perform overall?.....	3
Key features of the school.....	4
Recommendations	4
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?	4
How good is the students' personal and social development?.....	6
How good are the teaching and learning?	6
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?	7
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	7
How good are the leadership and management of the school?.....	8
Summary of inspection judgements	10
Next Steps.....	14
How to contact us.....	14

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.

The Lycée Française International was inspected in February 2010 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, science and French.

Basic information about the school

Located in Oud Metha, the Lycée Française International is a private school which provides a French education for 1065 girls and boys from maternelle to secondaire 8, aged five to 14 years. This represents an additional secondaire grade since the previous inspection in 2009. The school is supported by the French Ministry of Education. Of the 71 teachers over half were employed by the French Ministry of Education. Students were of 30 nationalities of whom nearly half were French. Significant minorities were Lebanese and Egyptian. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. They were predominantly positive. Almost all parents believed that their children liked school, that teaching was good, that their child was treated fairly, and that behaviour was good. They considered that staff encouraged their children to do their best and to become independent. Most of the replies stated that the school provided good information on how their child was performing; that progress was good in English, mathematics and science. The majority considered progress to be good in Arabic, but only a minority judged progress good in Islamic Education. The majority of respondents considered there was a good range of activities and that they were comfortable about approaching the school with questions or complaints. Most parents who replied considered that staff showed concern for their children, but only about half the respondents were of the opinion that the school consulted them about decisions.

How well does the school perform overall?

The Lycée Française International provided a good quality of education. Attainment and progress in the main subjects for children in Maternelle were good. In both primaire and secondaire, students' attainment and progress in English were outstanding. In all other key subjects in primaire, attainment and progress were good. In secondaire, attainment and progress in French and mathematics were good. In Islamic Education, Arabic and science, in this age range, attainment and progress were acceptable. Students' attitudes and behaviour were good across the school. Their contributions to discussions were good. Students' civic understanding, knowledge of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture were good in maternelle and primaire, but acceptable in secondaire. In Maternelle, children showed good age-appropriate economic and environmental understanding, but for the older students this was acceptable.

Teaching and learning were good in maternelle and primaire and acceptable in secondaire. Most teachers had good subject knowledge, prepared lessons appropriately and knew their students well. Since the previous inspection, the quality of assessment, especially marking, had remained inconsistent. Most teachers provided feedback in class and work was usually marked. Although overall marking was acceptable, students' books contained too little guidance on how to improve their work. The curriculum was good in maternelle and primaire and acceptable in secondaire. Students studied all the required subjects with a particularly rich range of languages on offer, matching the needs of its international students. However, the timetabling arrangement of Islamic Education and Arabic lessons was inappropriate and restricted students' progress in these subjects. Health and safety arrangements for the students were acceptable overall. The quality of support was good throughout the school. The educational and emotional well-being was a high priority for all staff and an academic counsellor was available for advice and guidance.

Leadership and management were good. Positive professional relationships were in place between senior leaders in the school. Effective middle management work was in place with progress evident in cross-curricular planning. The school knew itself well and had carried out improvements in line with the recommendations from the previous inspection. Partnerships with parents were good but there were limited links with the local community. Governance was good. There were good channels of communication for parents with the Conseil de Gestion, which provided good guidance on financial matters. Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable overall, though the school buildings did not provide the necessary specialist facilities for the growing secondary school.

Key features of the school

- Outstanding attainment and progress in English in the primaire and secondaire grades;
- Good attainment and progress across all subjects in the maternelle and primaire;
- Good attitudes and behaviour of the students;
- Good quality of support for students across the school;
- Good self-evaluation providing clear direction to the school.

Recommendations

- Improve assessment procedures so that the information gathered is used to for future planning and to guide students' learning;
- Ensure that the timetabling arrangements for Islamic Education and Arabic make more effective use of time and meet Ministry of Education requirements;
- Provide more appropriate and safer accommodation;
- Provide more resources to help students make progress, particularly in the secondaire.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were good in the primaire and acceptable in the secondaire. Arab-speaking students recited and read verses of The Holy Qur'an clearly and accurately. Most non-Arabic speaking students' recitation skills of The Holy Qur'an were in line with expectation in all age groups although students frequently made the same errors. Most primaire students demonstrated high ability in Qur'an recitation skills, had good knowledge about the Prophet's (PBUH) life and understood the Pillars of Faith. In secondaire most students were developing an acceptable understanding of the basic principles of Islam and showed an acceptable understanding of many Islamic teachings. However, across the school, too few non-Arab Muslim students understood how Islamic values could be applied to their lives.

Attainment and progress in Arabic were good in primaire and acceptable in secondaire. Most students studying Arabic as an additional language in the primaire had very good listening skills, responded to questions and followed instruction in Classical Arabic. Students taking Arabic as a first language applied their good knowledge of grammar in their writing of short texts by Grade 5. In secondaire, their reading, writing and listening skills were in line with expectations, although their speaking and their ability to express themselves orally using Classical Arabic less developed. Attainment levels of a significant minority of secondaire

students taking Arabic as an additional language were well below expected standards in relation to their years of study.

Attainment and progress in English were outstanding in primaire and secondaire and good in maternelle. By the end of maternelle, most children could speak in short sentences and read and write simple words and phrases. By the end of the primaire, students took part in discussions, used comparatives and expressed their opinions about articles they had read. Although progress across the school was slower in writing it was, nevertheless, good. In mid-primaire, handwriting was neat and students wrote sentences, correctly using comparatives. Older students wrote in various genres and justified their ideas. By the end of secondaire the majority of students achieved well above international expectations in age-appropriate internationally recognised tests.

Attainment and progress in French, the language of instruction, were good across the school. Many students achieved good results in the French national tests in CE1 (Grade 2) and CM2 (Grade 5). In the maternelle, well-developed listening skills helped children acquire a wide vocabulary. They became confident speakers. Good letter and word recognition from their early years helped their reading and by CE2 (Grade 3) it supported learning across a range of subjects. As from CP (Year 1) they wrote in cursive script. Most developed their writing in different genres. Writing a class newspaper helped them develop writing for a known audience. By the 4ième they were in the early stages of literary and grammatical analysis.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were good across the school. In school-based tests and external examinations most students attained levels which were above age related expectations. They had a good understanding of number and highly developed skills, knowledge and understanding of geometry. The youngest children counted objects confidently and were using mathematical language accurately when comparing size and length. Older students used their good knowledge of multiplication and inverse when carrying out division problems, while, in some classes, students were using and applying their skills when working in groups to solve challenging problems.

Attainment and progress in science in maternelle and primaire were good. In secondaire they were acceptable. Children in maternelle learned about different foods and where they came from. In early primaire, they learned the male and female names of different animals and used them when discussing the different ways animals are born, using newly-learned terms such as 'viviparous' correctly. Older students could discuss the life cycle of a tree, the need for sleep at different ages and the solar system. By the 4ième they carried out simple investigations. For example, the students interpreted diagrams to set up circuits, changed and recorded resistance and used the data to produce a graph.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good throughout the school. Students were conscientious and diligent in most lessons. They collaborated well and assumed different roles in group work activities with confidence. Students' contributions to discussions were particularly good, showing a maturity of thought and independence of mind. Almost all students valued the positive relationships they had with their teachers. Attendance was acceptable overall, and most students were punctual for lessons. However there were a few students who arrived late in the mornings.

Students understood their roles as citizens in school although there were limited opportunities for them to undertake positions of responsibility. While some classes had monitors with specified roles, this was inconsistent across the school. Students were considerate and demonstrated respect for their peers and teachers. They valued the diversity of their school population. In the Maternelle and primaire, students demonstrated a good understanding of Islam, while secondaire students were less secure in their knowledge and understanding. The majority of students knew how their faith could support them in their day to day lives.

Students across the school had an acceptable knowledge of Dubai and what makes it special. Older students knew a little about the global recession and how it had affected Dubai. The youngest children had good environmental awareness, taking care of their immediate surroundings, tidying away their equipment and putting their litter in the bins provided in class. Primaire and secondaire students had a basic awareness of some environmental issues and a minority had participated in Clean up Dubai campaign.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good in the Maternelle and primaire and acceptable across secondaire. Most teachers had good subject knowledge, prepared lessons appropriately and knew their students well. In the best lessons they adapted the difficulty of questions and tasks to individual needs, so that the more able students were extended. When most students were writing, teachers would often work with, support and encourage weaker students and occasionally extend the most able. This was not systematically applied throughout the school. In maternelle, teaching assistants were used inconsistently. Almost all teaching ensured that students expanded their vocabulary, by selecting daily routines or specific tasks which introduced them to new words and phrases. These were then used in other lessons or to recognise the days of the week in Maternelle, or to comment on literary genres in Sième, Year 8.

The quality of learning was good. In several lessons, especially in the older primaire and secondaire classes, students benefitted from small group discussions. Some teachers made good use of students as experts to explain to the class, whether it was a child in Maternelle explaining a new word to the class or an older student discussing a book being studied in French literature. Learning was at its best when students' interest was promoted in independent and investigative settings.

Assessment was acceptable. In lessons several teachers used good questioning to encourage students to consider different responses. Although students' books and work were regularly marked, this often consisted of ticks and indications where students had made mistakes. Occasionally a remark provided encouragement. Since much was written and corrected in class, the student received individual help on errors. Most students' books contained too little guidance on how to improve their work.

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

The curriculum was good in the maternelle and primaire and acceptable in secondaire. It covered all requirements of the French government. Subjects were allocated the appropriate amount of time. The allocation of several double lessons to Arabic and Islamic Education restricted students' learning, however. The school reflected on the range and quality of the curriculum and the impact of the experiences on students as well as the outcomes they achieved. Curricular development in English was particularly well planned. It was divided into four levels: beginner, lower and upper intermediate and advanced, thus ensuring that the needs and interests of most students were met. The addition of Spanish and Latin to the secondaire curriculum widened students' understanding of language. Insufficient use was made of computers in classrooms, thus limiting research opportunities in most subjects. Limited facilities and resources restricted opportunities for practical learning in science, especially in the secondaire. Opportunities were taken to develop cross-curricular themes which helped students develop their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects. A wide range of extra-curricular activities allowed primaire students to extend their learning. However, most were not on offer for students in secondaire. The school was aware of its place in the community but made limited use of its surroundings to enhance the curriculum. However, visits, for example to local museums, and the Maternelle children's visit to a baker, enriched students' understanding and learning. Physical activity in school was supplemented by sporting activities in Creek Park.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements to ensure the health, safety and security of all students were acceptable. School transport was in line with regulations. As the school was located within a big sports compound, shared roads were hazards as they lacked designated pedestrian areas. Buildings and facilities were in sound repair. The layout of the playgrounds was not ideal for the large number of students running around and playing. This was evident in the number of students requiring medical attention on a daily basis, mostly for minor bruises and scratches. The school maintained records for all aspects of school life, including medical records, records of incidents and emergency evacuation drills.

The quality of support was good. Relationships between staff and students were good and the educational and emotional well-being of students was a high priority for all staff. The school often sought the expertise of external specialists. Students' academic, personal and social

development was tracked and reported. Soutien sessions in French and mathematics or in-class support for other subjects were offered as necessary. Students' progress was monitored weekly. Students had ready access to the academic counsellor for advice and guidance on a range of matters. The schools kept accurate records of attendance and punctuality, although action was not always prompt in ensuring higher levels of punctuality in the morning. Within the scope of what the school could offer, in all phases good quality support was given to students with special educational needs and those who were underachieving. Their progress was regularly checked.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership and management were good. The Principal had been in place for just over a year and worked closely with the headmaster of the primaire and the bursar. They knew the school well and were visible and accessible. They had worked successfully to introduce a third year of secondaire. They had employed a consultant to work in the school, observe lessons and guide on teaching methods, and there were good opportunities for professional development. While subject co-ordinators were not part of the French school organisation, a few subject specialists undertook valuable subject co-ordination and planning. One outcome was a successful increase of cross-curricular planning and teaching.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The senior managers evaluated and monitored teaching and learning across subjects and reviewed the results in the two French national tests undertaken in Cours Élémentaire (Grade 2) and in Cours Moyen 2 (Grade 4). The school had undertaken significant measures to fulfil the recommendations of the previous report. Attainment and progress in Islamic Education had improved. There was now a prayer room for both girls and boys and the school had made progress towards complying with the Ministry of Education's requirements for teaching Islamic Education, although the distribution of lesson was not yet as prescribed. There had been little improvement in the quality of marking.

The school enjoyed good partnership with its parents, but had limited relationships with the local community. A parental agreement helped ensure that students arrived with appropriate books and equipment. The school communicated with the parent body through its website and electronic or traditional mail. Parents were interested in the school and participated in some of its activities. Parent delegates were on the school's main committees and appropriately involved in their work. A large majority believed that they received good information from the school and valued the staff's concern for their children's welfare. Parents' major concern was the tardiness in building a new school on a site acquired over a year ago.

Governance was good. The chairman was a founder member of school. The Conseil de Gestion had a wide range of financial, educational and pedagogical knowledge. The vice president provided good financial guidance, checking expenditure against pedagogical needs. There were regular opportunities for parents to approach the Conseil de Gestion with queries or complaints.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. The school had sufficient appropriate staff for its current needs. Despite the addition of a new floor which had provided additional classrooms, the current accommodation was barely fit for purpose and did not provide the necessary specialist facilities and resources for its growing secondary. Since the previous inspection benches had been provided for students outside and 2000 books had been added to the library, with a separate library with a good range of story books for the maternelle children.

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:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding
Progress over time	Good	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are the students' attainment and progress in French?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Good	Acceptable

How good is the students' personal and social development?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Good	Acceptable
Economic and environmental understanding	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are teaching and learning?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?			
Age group:	Maternelle	Primaire	Secondaire
Health and safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of support	Good	Good	Good

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.

Copyright 2010

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school. It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.