

Dubai Police Kindergarten (Deira Branch) Inspection Report

Report published May 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.

Dubai Police Kindergarten was inspected in January 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 Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Deira, Dubai Police Kindergarten is a private school providing education for children, aged from three to five years. The school follows the Ministry of Education curriculum, modified by the school. At the time of the inspection, there were 62 children on roll. The children's attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was unsatisfactory.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Their views were mainly positive about the work, care and activities of the children. A few parents felt that the building was not suitable, and others said they would like more homework and trips for their children.

How well does the school perform overall?

Attainment and progress in Arabic were good. Children could recognise colours, knew the letter names and were able to join letters and read words. They answered questions in sentences. Their speaking skills were good. Attainment and progress in English were acceptable. Children listened very well and could speak to their class. In KG2 children identified the names and sounds of the first letter of words. They were beginning to write letters independently. Attainment and progress in mathematics were acceptable. Most children identified and could name several geometrical shapes. Children counted to fifteen independently and up to thirty with the help of the teacher. Problem solving skills were less well developed. Although progress was acceptable, activities were not always challenging enough. Attainment and progress in science were acceptable and children had a good knowledge of topics such as space and animals. There were too few opportunities for them to investigate and solve problems. Children's personal and social development was good. They behaved well in lessons and around the school. They worked together, showing courtesy and

taking turns. They were proud of their Islamic identity. They reflected on the importance of Islam and knew the name of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and the importance of prayer. Children showed their understanding of the economics of Dubai through visits to shopping malls. Attendance was unsatisfactory.

The quality of teaching was acceptable. Teachers used a good range of resources and organised lessons well. Their subject knowledge was good in Arabic and mathematics. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, too little use was made of assessment to plan lessons. The quality of learning was acceptable overall. New concepts were well understood by most children by the end of a series of lessons. The learning of skills was less well developed than the learning of knowledge. Assessment was acceptable. Teachers knew their children well and kept records of their progress. The quality of the curriculum was also acceptable and was based on the Ministry of Education curriculum. The curriculum content was often reviewed and updated with additional units or concepts introduced to widen children's knowledge. Arrangements to secure children's health, safety and security were good. Children were well supervised during the school day and on the buses. Premises and facilities were clean and well maintained. The quality of support at the school was acceptable. Relationships between staff and children were generally positive. The school kept accurate and up to date records of attendance.

The leadership and management of the school were acceptable. Subject leaders had made improvements within their individual subjects. The school's links with parents and the community were good. Parents found the school very welcoming and received regular information. The school was housed in a building which restricted children's learning but the school was due to move to more suitable accommodation once building works had been completed. Governance was good. The Police Liaison Officer was highly committed to improvement and provided an outstanding channel through which concerns could be communicated between the school and home. Classroom resources were poor.

Key features of the school

- The action plan prepared by the school was being well implemented and had resulted in good attainment and progress in Arabic;
- Children's understanding of Islamic values reinforced their good behaviour and attitudes;
- Very good procedures to ensure children's safety and security on the premises and on the buses;
- Positive and productive links with parents and the community;
- The school benefited from the high level of commitment and support from Dubai Police, through the Police Liaison Officer.

Recommendations

- Improve the facilities so that a full range of activities for children can take place on a more regular basis;
- Make better use of time by planning teaching and learning in more detail for the start of the day;
- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - writing clear and measurable learning objectives, when planning lessons;
 - planning for children's differing learning needs;
 - assessing what individual children know, can do and what they understand in a lesson;
 - providing a wider range of activities so children are not seated for long periods at a time and are actively involved in their learning;
- Create an overview of the curriculum which enables senior management to track the progress of children against specific knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts, in different subjects and areas of learning;
- Encourage children to become more independent through providing clearer guidance to classroom assistants about their roles;
- Continue to improve children's attendance.

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

Attainment and progress in Arabic were good and children achieved above age-related expectations. All children could recognise colours, knew the letter names and were able to join letters and read words. They answered questions and gave examples by constructing one to two sentences. They closed their eyes and informed the class about their dreams in well-constructed Arabic. Progress was evident in their improving speaking skills: they could tell a short story using correct language. Almost all children consolidated their learning by singing, had appropriate fine co-ordination skills and used pencils correctly. They could write words in their activities book and gave examples from the textbook.

In English, attainment and progress were acceptable. Children listened very well for substantial lengths of time. Almost all tried to join in songs and rhymes with varying degrees of success. Children could speak to their class about toys they had brought from home and did so with some success. Overall, their standard of speaking, for children learning English as an additional language, was acceptable. In KG2 children could read most of the letters of the alphabet in English by the end of the year and identified the names and sounds of the first letter of words. They traced over letters accurately and were beginning to write letters independently.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were acceptable. Children in KG1 counted up to ten with confidence and wrote the numerals from 1 to 7. Most children could identify and name a circle, square and triangle, in both Arabic and English and, in KG2, could also identify a rectangle. In KG2, children counted to fifteen independently and up to thirty with the help of the teacher. The majority read numbers above ten from flash cards. Problem solving skills were less developed, as activities often did not promote higher-order thinking skills. Overall, progress over time was acceptable, but progress in lessons was restricted, as activities tended to involve colouring, instead of developing number concepts and were not challenging enough.

Attainment and progress in science were acceptable. KG1 children knew that some objects sink and others float and were beginning to use these words in sentences when asked to predict which objects sink, which float and why. Their understanding of the world around them was growing and they could name animals living in different habitats. Children in KG2 had a good knowledge of space and could name the sun, moon, the stars and a few planets. They were aware that humans in space need special equipment due to a lack of oxygen and gravity. There was evident progress in the children's knowledge and understanding but too few opportunities for them to investigate and solve problems for themselves.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Overall, children's personal and social development was good. Behaviour was good in lessons and around the school and in most cases, children were punctual for morning arrival and lessons. Children had acceptable self-control and relationships were good throughout the school. This was demonstrated by children working co-operatively together in their classes and in the playground. Children showed courtesy and kindness by listening and taking turns and through talking politely to each other and adults. All children maintained positive relationships between themselves and their teachers. Attendance levels for the last semester and during the inspection were low.

Children demonstrated a good understanding of Islam and were proud of their Islamic identity. They were also proud of their UAE nationality and the traditions, culture and customs. They were happy living in Dubai. Almost all knew the name of the leader of Dubai and the UAE's other rulers, and knew a few of the names of the other Emirates. Children knew and reflected on the importance of Islam, and were knowledgeable about the basic principles. They knew the name of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and his family, and other prophets' names. They understood the importance of prayer and memorised many of them, including the morning and evening prayer.

The school provided children with a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of the nature of Dubai's economic progress through school trips. Children were aware of Dubai's historical and contemporary development, They explained what they experienced when they walked in Dubai, such as malls, towers, roads and the Metro and expressed their positive feelings about these developments.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was acceptable overall. Teachers prepared, resourced and organised lessons well. They used a good range of resources to help make lessons interesting, such as audio and visual equipment, flash cards and play-dough. Their subject knowledge was good, especially in Arabic and mathematics. Teachers used questioning to reinforce learning, but this was often done by asking the whole class for a collective, one-word answer. The teaching of phonics was systematic and taught in a variety of ways, taking account of children's different needs including, for example, through song, art, pictures and actions, as well as through words and numbers. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, too little use was made of assessment to plan different activities to challenge higher-attaining children. Acceptable support was generally given to children who found work more difficult.

The quality of learning was acceptable. New concepts were understood by most children following a series of lessons. Children chose from a range of activities but their skills were not extended well through interaction with adults. The learning of phonics was good, with children increasing their knowledge of the alphabet, sounds of letters, and vocabulary. Basic positional language was developed through physical play, actions songs and creative activities. Children's learning in Arabic was also supported by appropriate activities. Generally, however,

the learning of skills was less well developed than the learning of knowledge. Where learning was unsatisfactory, children did not develop their personal and social skills, as they were not encouraged to be independent or to help one another. Learning also became unsatisfactory when children sat for too long listening to the teacher or when time was not constructively used, such as on arrival in the morning.

Assessment was acceptable. Teachers knew their children well and kept records of their progress. However, these did not record what each child knew, could do and whether they understood a given concept. For example, when counting to 30, it was not clear which children were able to do this, as it was a whole-class activity. Teachers rarely used assessment in class to inform their teaching and modify strategies to meet the needs of individuals. Learning objectives were often vague, were not measurable and, therefore, could not be used effectively to assess progress.

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

The quality of the curriculum offered at the school was acceptable. The curriculum was based on the Ministry of Education curriculum. It was adequate and included the key subjects, plus art. These subjects were delivered in two blocks during which the language of instruction was either English or Arabic. Children also studied information and communication technology (ICT) once a week, when they enjoyed educational computer games. Although not formally reviewed, the curriculum content was often updated with additional units or concepts introduced to reinforce students' knowledge of the world around them. The curriculum ensured continuity from KG1 to KG2 by building on the same topics and concepts; however the progression of specific skills was not clearly specified in the yearly planners. There were cross-curricular links, as numbers, shapes and scientific concepts were taught in both Arabic and English, and were always reinforced in art lessons. The school enriched the curriculum through good links with the community. Children went on numerous field trips, such as to a book fair, police headquarters, dental clinic and the local hospital on International Children's Day. The school also received guest speakers who explained the importance of healthy eating, and a representative from Dubai Electricity and Water Authority who illustrated, through a puppet show, the importance of water and energy conservation. The school also hosted many events to foster nationalism, such as the Best National Dress competition.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements to secure children's health, safety and security were good. Children were well supervised during the school day and on the buses. All buses had monitors, and parents had direct access to the monitor and bus driver by telephone. Premises and facilities, although not fit for purpose, were clean and well maintained. The school promptly addressed a safety issue when identified. Accurate and updated medical records were kept and, in case of emergency, the school had immediate access to the Dubai Police clinic nearby. Healthy lifestyles were promoted through lectures with specialists and a memo to parents specifying what would be considered a healthy snack for the children. Although children took some physical exercise on the climbing equipment in the play area, their physical development was not further enhanced through a wider range of activities or formal physical education lessons. Child protection policies and practices were acceptable.

The quality of support at the school was acceptable. Staff-child relationships were generally positive and children were mostly happy to be at school. Children's academic performance was tracked and recorded and parents were sent progress reports twice a year. Although these reports were positive, they were not very informative in pinpointing each child's strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, these reports did not include targets for further improvement or a section on the child's personal and social development. Support for children's personal development was often over directed in lessons and did not allow them to become independent and self-disciplined. The school kept accurate and updated records of attendance and parents were contacted immediately when a child was noted as absent in the morning.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The leadership and management of the school were acceptable overall. Teachers had visited other schools to note good practice, and further visits had been planned. Senior staff observed lessons, monitored children's progress and discussed with teachers how improvements could be made. Subject leaders had made improvements within their individual subjects but there was not enough collective planning by middle management to ensure progression in and across all subjects.

Processes for school self-evaluation were acceptable. Improvements in children's learning were beginning to take place but were not yet seen in all lessons. Senior staff analysed children's records to note the areas in which children were weak or needed further challenge. However, the outcomes of this analysis were not seen in the teachers' planning of lessons, which tended to be centred round whole-class teaching and learning. The school had taken account of the previous inspection report and the views of teachers and parents, and had produced a suitable action plan.

The school's links with parents and the community were good. Parents found the school very welcoming and were regularly informed as to what was to be taught and how their children were progressing. They were consulted whenever there were any concerns, and were encouraged to contribute to their children's learning. An example of this was the sending

home of key words that were being learnt in school for reinforcement by parents. Parents accompanied children on educational visits and contributed to lessons, for example, by reading a story or leading a workshop with the children. Links with the community were strong, with visits to many places of interest. Visitors to the school made a good contribution to children's learning.

The Dubai Police gave good support to the school and, as the owners, held the school to account well. The Police Liaison Officer was highly committed and provided an effective communication channel through which concerns could be directed.

The school was housed in a building which restricted children's learning and was not fit for purpose. However, the Dubai Police had found another building which, once structural work and decoration has been completed, should provide suitable accommodation. The school was well staffed with classroom assistants but their roles were not clearly defined to meet the needs of young children. Whilst classroom resources were barely adequate, there was little opportunity to use more, because of the lack of space. Outdoor equipment, on the other hand, was of very good quality and provided challenging opportunities for children to exercise and develop their climbing and balancing skills.

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 Arabic?	
Age group:	Kindergarten
Attainment	Good
Progress over time	Good

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

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

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

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

How good are teaching and learning?	
Age group:	Kindergarten
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?	
Age group:	Kindergarten
Curriculum quality	Acceptable

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

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Acceptable

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.

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