

Lycée Georges Pompidou Primary Inspection Report

Grades Maternelle to Cours Élémentaire 2
Kindergarten to Grade 5

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.

Lycée Georges Pompidou Primary School 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, French, English, mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Oud Metha, Lycée Georges Pompidou Primary School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Maternelle (Kindergarten) to Cours Elementaire 2 (CE2 or Grade 5), ages three to 11 years. The school follows a French curriculum and around half of the students were French. The others were of a wide range of nationalities. A new Principal had taken up his post shortly before the inspection. During the inspection visit, five teachers were absent, including three of the teachers of Arabic and Islamic Education who were attending a professional development course. Supply teachers were covering five teaching timetables. At the time of the inspection, there were 558 students on roll. 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. Responses indicated high levels of satisfaction with the school. Almost all parents agreed that progress in mathematics and behaviour were good, that their children liked coming to school, were encouraged to become independent and were kept safe and healthy. Most considered that they had good information on their child's progress and that their child was treated fairly. They felt that staff members showed concern about their children's care and welfare. They considered that links with parents were good and were comfortable about approaching the school. Most parents believed that the school was well led, that they were consulted, that teachers explained how parents could help their children and that, if they raised a matter of concern, the school would do something about it. A majority thought that the school responded positively to the recommendations of the previous report and that the school had good links with the local community.

How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, the school provided an acceptable quality of education for students. The recently appointed Principal showed good awareness where improvement was needed and had set up some appropriate initiatives. Students in maternelle made good progress in all key subjects, except English, where progress was acceptable. Primary students made good progress in French, and acceptable progress in Arabic as a first language, English and mathematics by Grade 5. Their progress was unsatisfactory in Islamic Education, Arabic as a second language and science. A local adviser was helping to improve teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic which both received the recommended teaching time. The previously long English lesson time had been brought in line with other subjects. Students' attitudes and behaviour were good. Their civic awareness, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good in maternelle and acceptable in primary. Attendance in the previous academic year was acceptable, but a few students arrived late in the mornings.

The quality of teaching and learning were good in maternelle and acceptable in primary grades. Assessment was acceptable across the school. Regular oral feedback was more consistently better than written marking, which rarely provided clear guidance on how to improve. The curriculum had been recently amended and covered all subjects required within a French curriculum. Students enjoyed good opportunities to participate in a range of extra-curricular activities. They were kept healthy and secure and premises were clean, but the number of staff supervising children in outdoor play was too few on occasions. The school tested students regularly, but there was little evidence that the results were used to guide future learning. The school worked closely with parents for the welfare of its students.

Management and leadership were acceptable because the new Principal had not had time to bring about required improvements. He prioritised observation of teaching and learning. The school had taken appropriate action on the recommendations in the previous report. School reports provided parents with good information about their children's progress. Governance of the school was good. The governing body included teacher and parent representation and brought a wide range of experience to guide the school. The school was fully staffed, mostly with experienced teachers. The accommodation and resources were adequate, but governors were planning to find larger premises. The school fulfilled its mission to provide a French programme of education which enabled children to make smooth transitions to other French schools.

Key features of the school

Inspectors identified the following key features of the school:

- Students attained good results in French by Grade 5;
- Provision in the maternelle was, in general, good;
- The recently appointed Principal was making improvements;
- The school had addressed all key issues raised in the previous inspection report;
- Support for maternelle students with special educational needs was commendable;
- Governance was good and included both teacher and parent representation.

Recommendations

- Raise attainment in Islamic Education, Arabic as a second language, and science in the primary school;
- Use assessment data more effectively to plan to meet the needs of individual students;
- Improve the quality of oral and written feedback to students so that they know what to do to improve their work.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were unsatisfactory. Most students in Grades 1 and 2 could recite two to four chapters of The Holy Qur'an, knew the five pillars of Islam and the number of daily prayers. They also knew and understood that Allah is the sole Creator and Provider. In Grade 2, they could perform ablution and prayers correctly. However, in Grades 3, 4 and 5, most students could not recite from The Holy Qur'an properly. Moreover, their memorisation of The Holy Qur'an was well below age-related expectations. Most students' knowledge about Islamic characters and key events were also below the expected levels. They did not have sufficient understanding of the duties and the responsibilities of Muslims.

Attainment in Arabic was unsatisfactory overall, but acceptable for students studying Arabic as a first language. Most students listened well and responded to teachers. Students could not communicate orally beyond this limited context. However, the students' reading skills were acceptable and reading comprehension skills were better. By Grade 5 students could answer questions of varying difficulty. Their writing skills were acceptable overall. In early primary years, most students constructed sentences correctly and by Grade 5 they were able to write extended answers. For most students studying Arabic as an additional language, listening, reading, speaking and writing skills were underdeveloped.

Attainment and progress in English were acceptable throughout the school. In maternelle, students understood spoken words and phrases and could answer simple questions. Most were able to copy and fill in words on worksheets. By Grade 5, most students were able to describe and write about events and were beginning to distinguish between the use of present, past and future tenses. Although progress developing writing skills across the school was slower than speaking and listening, the older students were able to express personal opinions and write texts on a range of familiar topics. The majority of students in Grade 5 demonstrated knowledge, skills and understanding that were in line with international age-related expectations.

Attainment and progress in French were good across the school. The majority of students reached marks in the top quartile in the French Ministry of Education tests. Maternelle students made good progress in listening, recognising letters and learning new words. In the early primary years, most students acquired good cursive writing skills, their spelling became more accurate and most learned to make verbs and adjectives agree with nouns used. They reached acceptable standards. By Year 5, they read fluently and extracted knowledge from fiction and non-fiction texts to support their learning in other subjects. Their increasing knowledge of grammar helped improve the accuracy of their writing and prepared them to write in a range of genres.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were good in maternelle and acceptable in Grades 1 to 5. Almost all children in maternelle counted confidently with real objects and the youngest children could identify numbers and name common two-dimensional shapes. Students in maternelle solved problems with maturity when required to choose and follow a route outdoors. Progress slowed in the primary stages but was accelerated in the final year and resulted in most students gaining good grades in the French national test in Grade 5. Geometry expectations were too low and this limited progress. Students across the school had few opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in independent problem solving activities; this had a negative impact on attainment.

Student attainment and progress in science were good in maternelle but unsatisfactory in primary grades. Students started school with attainment that was at the expected level for their ages. Maternelle students had opportunities to explore the environment. They made observations and were beginning to understand and record what they were looking at. In Grades 1 to 5 they were able to carry out simple activities but did not have enough understanding of how to make scientific predictions. Most students were able to answer questions from worksheets but they could not complete open-ended inquiries or solve problems. As a result, by the time they reached Grade 5 there were significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of science.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good in both sections. Students responded well to adults and were courteous, confident and helpful. They co-operated with each other both socially and when working in classrooms. In lessons where teachers did not have effective class management skills, a few students became restless. Levels of attendance for the last academic term were acceptable. Although all students were punctual in arriving to their classes during the day, a few arrived late in the mornings.

Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good in maternelle and acceptable in primary. Students in maternelle carried out assignments with responsibility. Primary school students contributed to the life of the school by participating in the school fête, and having Grade 5 delegates. There were limited opportunities for them to do more. Although many students had been living in Dubai for years, they lacked basic knowledge about Islam. On the other hand, almost all students viewed the multi-cultural nature of Dubai as an enriching experience.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was good in maternelle and acceptable in primary. Maternelle children kept their surrounding environment clean and tidy and participated willingly in clean-up activities. Most students in primary could name features in Dubai which reflected economic progress and understood that they were in Dubai due to employment opportunities for their parents. They could not, however, give age appropriate examples of how they could help sustain the environment or help in reducing waste.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good in the maternelle and acceptable in the primary. In maternelle teaching was consistently of a good quality. In most lessons, teachers gave sufficient attention to the need for young children to be active in their learning. Consequently, they were frequently making decisions and problem solving in order to develop higher order thinking skills and secure understanding. In Grades 1 to 5, most teachers demonstrated at least acceptable knowledge of their subjects. They were not always aware of the best way to teach their subjects. Where planning and questioning were thorough and focussed, the needs of all learners were met. Some teachers used resources other than text books to good effect. For example, in one class, students used finger puppets to generate their own questions and further develop their English language skills.

The quality of learning was good in the maternelle and acceptable in Grades 1 to 5. In maternelle, children were fully engaged in their learning, particularly when finding out about the world around them. A sense of awe and wonder was tangible in one class when children were fully immersed in group work, observing insects and comparing the growth of beans they had planted. In Grades 1 to 5, students in Arabic lessons used newspapers to make connections to the real world, whilst a trip to the park enabled students to make links between different areas of learning. In the primary grades, students showed good understanding of verb tenses and used the correct names to describe them. Good questioning

in French lessons encouraged a few students to review the accuracy of their agreements. But, all too often, students were passive recipients of knowledge and there were few opportunities for them to develop higher order thinking skills. In a few lessons, students were expected to wait for their peers to complete their work and, consequently, their progress was limited.

Assessment was acceptable across the school. Whilst there was an improvement in the marking and correction in some French books, this was not a consistent feature across grades and subjects. Observations and assessments were undertaken regularly in the maternelle and teachers used the results of these to inform their future planning. Oral feedback to students was a regular feature of most lessons. Exercise books were usually marked, but there were few informative comments about how students could improve. It was not a regular feature of the school's assessment procedures for students to evaluate their own or others' work.

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

The curriculum was good in maternelle and acceptable in primary grades. It had been recently updated to provide coverage of what was currently taught in France. It was generally broad and balanced and, in the primary phase, mostly dictated by text books. The curriculum did not always provide sufficient challenge for all groups of students. An improvement since the last inspection was that the school gave the same length of time to English lessons as to other subjects. In maternelle, the curriculum was enriched by providing opportunities for students to learn English and other skills across a range of subjects in meaningful and interesting contexts. Most staff in maternelle provided a curriculum that included practical experiences, ensuring that the needs and interests of most students were met. In primary grades there was some evidence of cross-curricular themes, but few opportunities for students to make useful connections between subjects and aspects. For example, little use was made of information and communication technology (ICT) within lessons in order to extend learning. There were missed opportunities in the curriculum for students to broaden their knowledge and understanding, especially in science and Arabic. Likewise, opportunities to learn about the culture and traditions of the UAE were missed. The school had established strong links to a wide network of French schools as far away as India providing opportunities for shared curriculum content. There were many opportunities for all students to participate in a wide range of paid extra-curricular activities allowing them to extend their learning and broaden their interests.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements to ensure students' health, safety and security were good in maternelle and acceptable in primary. The school had rigorous arrangements in place when taking students on fieldtrips. There were also effective arrangements for collecting and delivering students to and from buses. Premises and buildings were clean and maintained, but some abandoned corners were filled with unused objects. Furthermore, a fence was too low in some parts which presented a security risk to students. Medical records were updated and the nurse collaborated with teachers on a number of topics to promote healthy lifestyles, such as dental hygiene. Students were supervised throughout their time at school, but the levels of supervision in some courtyards required improvement.

The quality of support for students across the school was good in maternelle and acceptable in the primary phase. In particular, the support for students with special educational needs in maternelle was commendable. Also notable was the prompt follow-up action taken by staff when children were absent. Across the school, staff-student relationships were mainly positive, although there were instances reported by staff, students and parents which were cause for concern. Students demonstrated good behaviour across the school and provided a warm welcome to visitors in their classes. Whilst the school tested students regularly, there was little indication that the results of assessments were used to guide students in their future learning. Reports to parents were informative. The school recorded attendance and punctuality and worked closely with parents to ensure the safety and well being of students.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership and management were of acceptable quality, but many good features were emerging. The recently appointed Principal accurately judged the school's strengths and areas needing attention, but he had not had sufficient time to fully address areas identified for improvement. He inherited a school with no improvement plan, and made this a priority to guide future decisions and spending. He had established good links with the director of the senior school to whom he reported. He had prioritised teaching and learning and his observation of lessons had identified staff for whom additional training was needed. He worked effectively with the school's governors and other stakeholders.

The school had taken appropriate action following the previous inspection. Arabic and Islamic Education had received the required time allocations. Carrying out oral and written testing in Arabic had helped identify students' weaknesses. The school employed a local consultant to observe Arabic and Islamic teachers weekly. He reported regularly to the Principal in an attempt to improve the quality of teaching. The previously 90 minute-long English lessons had been reduced to bring them in line with other subjects. The school's reporting systems had improved. Students were assessed against specific subject competencies which the school reported to parents, keeping them well informed about their children's performance.

The school and the Principal enjoyed positive relationships with parents. Parents valued a French curriculum for their children which enabled smooth transition to other French schools.

The parental response to the DSIB on-line questionnaire showed that high proportions received good information on the progress of their children and were comfortable about approaching the school.

Governance of the school was good. Parents on the governing body brought a wide range of financial and business expertise which served the school well and guided its financial management. The governing body met regularly and governors felt well consulted and informed.

The school was fully staffed. Most teachers had extensive teaching experience and knew their students well. The school's accommodation and facilities were acceptable but there were important weaknesses. Outside play areas were restricted, so the school took students out for sport and games. Classrooms were spacious; many had attractive displays of students' work. The governors were in early stages of planning to expand to larger premises. The school's learning resources were adequate. It had one room equipped with computers, but ICT was not used regularly or effectively as a teaching and learning tool.

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	Primary
Attainment	Not applicable	Unsatisfactory
Progress over time	Not applicable	Unsatisfactory

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?		
Age group:	Maternelle	Primary
Attainment	Not applicable	Unsatisfactory
Progress over time	Not applicable	Acceptable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.

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