

INSPECTION REPORT

Jebel Ali Primary school

Report published in April 2014

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Jebel Ali Primary school

Location	Jebel Ali
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jebelalishool.org
Telephone	04-8846485
Address	Jebel Ali P .O. BOX 17111 Dubai
Acting Principal	Ann Jones
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	4-11 / FS2 to Year 6
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	656
Largest nationality group of Students	UK
Number of Emirati students	1 (less than 1%)
Date of the inspection	17th March to 19th March 2014

Contents

The context of the school	3
Overall school performance 2013-2014	4
Key strengths	4
Recommendations	4
Progress since the last inspection	5
Trend of overall performance.....	5
How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?	6
How good is the students' personal and social development?	7
How good are teaching and assessment?.....	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?	8
How well does the school protect and support students?	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	8
How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?.....	13
How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?.....	14
What are the views of parents, teachers and students?.....	15
What happens next?	16
How to contact us	16

The context of the school

Located in Jebel Ali Village, Jebel Ali Primary School educates 656 boys and girls between the ages of four and 11 years. The school operated on two sites, with the Foundation Stage class and Years 1 and 2 situated less than a kilometre from the school's original site which accommodated Years 3 to 6.

The school followed the English National Curriculum and students sat the standard assessment tasks at ages seven and eleven. The school employed 49 teachers, including the school's senior leaders, all of whom held relevant degrees or teaching qualifications. These were supported by 24 teaching assistants. There had been a change to the school leadership since the last inspection and an interim head teacher had been leading the school since January. A new head teacher was to take up post at the start of the new school year. Just over half of the student population came from the UK, with ten percent being from other European countries, and 5 percent each from India and Pakistan. There was one UAE national. 14 students took Arabic as a first language. The school had identified 59 students who had a special educational need. These students were supported by 7 specialist support staff.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Good

Key strengths

- The improved progress made in Islamic Education;
- The outstanding provision and outcomes in the Foundation Stage and the consistently high attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science in the primary phase;
- Students' well-developed learning skills, frequently demonstrated in most lessons, and their outstanding personal development;
- The effective use of assessment which supported high quality teaching;
- The dedication to meeting the individual needs and well-being of students through impressive curriculum design, high quality support and outstanding provision for health and safety;
- The outstanding leadership, management and governance of the school and the effective partnership with parents leading to sustained, high quality provision, during a period of change.

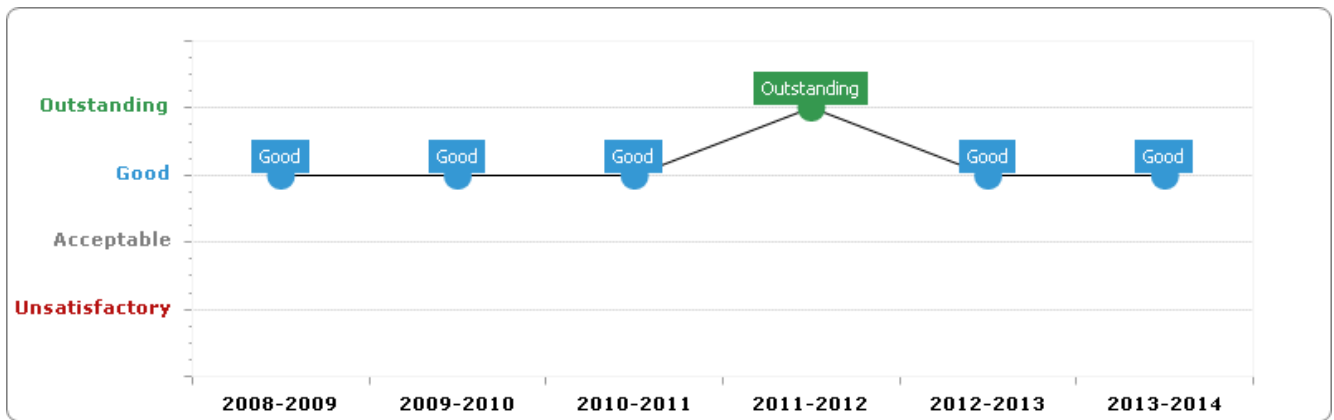
Recommendations

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in Islamic Education and Arabic by:
 - ensuring all teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and are supported in using accurate assessment data to set high expectations for all students;
 - ensuring teachers employ a variety of appropriate teaching styles and activities in lessons to motivate students;
 - enriching the curriculum;
- Improve the accuracy of self-evaluation.

Progress since the last inspection

Students were making improved progress in Islamic Education as a result of more effective teaching and improvements in the curriculum. Students were able to demonstrate a range of learning skills when given the opportunities. There was a high proportion of very effective teaching in most subjects. The curriculum design was very effective in meeting most of the diverse range of students' needs, interests and talents. The interim head teacher, with the support of her senior leadership team, had led the school very well and maintained its expected high standards.

Trend of overall performance



How good are the students' attainment progress and learning skills?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Quality of students' learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Outstanding	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Good
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Outstanding
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Outstanding
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first and an additional language was acceptable. In English, mathematics and science attainment was outstanding across the school. Most students knew and understood basic Islamic concepts and principles. They learnt the prescribed chapters of the Holy Quran and showed adequate understanding of the verses. Students' listening skills in Arabic as a first and as an additional language were age appropriate. Arab students could answer direct and indirect questions in short sentences although they frequently relied on colloquial language. Independent reading and writing skills were underdeveloped. Additional language students could read words but their pronunciation was often inaccurate. Speaking skills were limited and often had errors whilst writing skills were limited to copying. English speaking skills in the Foundation Stage (FS) were well-developed and most students throughout the school were articulate and confident speakers. Reading skills were excellent and students showed enjoyment of stories and exploring written texts as they moved through the school. Writing skills were well-developed. Students could write using different styles. In the FS, almost all children attained very well in basic numeracy skills and used these in their play activities. Most primary students could apply their knowledge and understanding of number, measure, shape and data-handling to real life situations. In science, most students exceeded curriculum expectations. FS children demonstrated an excellent knowledge and understanding of living things and the world around them. Students' natural curiosity equipped them with the attitudes, dispositions and strategies to develop scientific ideas and concepts.

Progress in Arabic as a first and as an additional language was acceptable. In Islamic Education, progress was good and in English, mathematics and science it was outstanding across the school. Most students made significant progress from their starting points in Quran, Hadeeth and in their knowledge of basic principles of the Islamic faith. In Arabic as a first language, most students made acceptable progress in listening and basic interaction skills. Progress in writing was very slow. Most students of Arabic as an additional language made acceptable progress in learning to shape Arabic script and in reading familiar words. Progress in speaking was limited. Children in the FS made excellent progress in English in developing an understanding of letters and sounds to make words. Reading skills were consistently developed across the school. Students' acquisition and use of vocabulary throughout the school contributed to their outstanding progress in creative and factual writing. In the FS, children made consistent progress in understanding early number work, weighing and measuring. Primary students were confident in applying their numeracy skills to solve increasingly challenging problems. Most students acquired and used a wide range of appropriate scientific vocabulary and made outstanding progress in scientific knowledge and understanding and in their enquiry and investigative skills.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Students' learning skills were outstanding across the school. Almost all students were excited by a range of learning experiences. They worked well together in pairs and groups and enjoyed sharing their ideas and co-operating during practical tasks. They increasingly took responsibility for their own learning, reviewing their learning targets in subjects and critically reviewing their own work as well as that of others. They carried out joint research projects and scientific investigations with enthusiasm and diligence and could use technology to enhance their learning and research. Students enjoyed their lessons and especially the lively interchange of ideas in class discussions. In most lessons they saw the relevance of their learning in the real world and made connections across different ways of learning. Students' use of high quality learning skills were not always evident in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal development was outstanding in almost all respects. Most students had positive and responsible attitudes. They were self-disciplined, responded very well to adults and others and resolved difficulties in mature ways. Relationships with other students and with staff were respectful and considerate and they cared for each other's needs. Students knew how to live healthy lives. They made sensible choices about their own health and fitness and they participated in a wide range of physical activities. Attendance was outstanding.

Students had a clear understanding of how Islamic values influenced society and demonstrated respect through their behaviour and attitudes. They appreciated the heritage and culture of the UAE and could talk about life in Dubai and its features. Students demonstrated an in-depth understanding of their own cultures and traditions and could give examples of the cultures of students from different nationalities.

Community and environmental understanding was outstanding. Students were proactive and responsible members of the school. They had a strong work ethic. They showed initiative and were creative in developing their own projects. Their elected School Council influenced school life. Students cared for their school and sought ways to improve its environment. Most students were involved in caring for the local community and the environment. They had an excellent understanding of local and global stability and conservation.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was outstanding in the FS and good in the primary phase, where there was a significant amount of highly effective teaching. Most teachers had outstanding subject knowledge and understood how students learn. FS teachers and support staff understood that children learn best through play and discovery and planned interesting learning activities for them. Throughout the school most lessons were planned carefully and teachers explained what was to be learnt and reviewed progress during the lesson. They encouraged lively discussions in class. Resources were deployed well to make learning exciting, capture students' interest and deepen their understanding. Relationships between teachers and pupils were strong in most classes and contributed to the positive learning ethos. Teaching was especially effective in English, mathematics, science, and other subjects where the range of teaching strategies and learning experiences challenged and motivated students to do their best. In Islamic Education and Arabic lessons, teaching was acceptable but often lacked challenge and interest for students.

Assessment was outstanding across the school. Recent improvements had been made in monitoring students' progress which was carefully assessed at regular intervals. Learning reviews for all students were effectively used to identify where additional support or challenge was needed. Data was shared with class teachers and subject leaders to ensure that lessons were planned to meet the needs of all groups of students and engage and accelerate their progress. In most lessons teachers were skilled in asking questions to assess how well students understood their learning and where further explanation was needed. Work was marked efficiently and guidance given on how a piece of work could be improved. Students were encouraged to reflect on their learning and that of their classmates in order to develop insight into progress. They were able to identify areas for improvement.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum quality was outstanding in the FS and good in the primary phase. It was kept under constant review to ensure it was aligned to the new FS and English National Curricula, with skills development across the range of subjects a priority. The Islamic Education and Arabic curricula were aligned to the Ministry of Education requirements and were compliant. There was an appropriate balance of core and non-core subjects. Continuity and progression between phases was evident in the planning documents and the progress made in most subjects ensured students were well-prepared for the next stage of education. Creative planning provided excellent cross-curricular links and real-life applications. Planning was less effective in Islamic Education and Arabic. Students enjoyed participating in a wide range of after-school and enrichment activities including sports, science and the arts. Music was a strength of the school.

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The curriculum designed to meet the individual needs of students was outstanding. It was planned to provide stimulating and appropriately challenging opportunities for all groups of students, particularly students with special educational needs and low attaining students. Personalised learning in small groups and booster groups was a strong feature across the school. It supported students who were not in any specific learning support category. Thoughtful curriculum planning motivated students when problem solving and developing higher order thinking skills during research. The curriculum had considerable variety of provision in and out of the classrooms that promoted and responded to the particular needs and interests of all students.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for health and safety were outstanding. Both school sites were safe, secure and hygienic for staff, students and visitors. Full-time security including visitor registration was provided. Ramps facilitated wheelchair access. Clear protocols were in place to provide safe entry and exit from the premises and to reduce risk in the vicinity of the school. Parents adhered to these protocols when accompanying their children to and from school. Safe practices were established on school transport. The school nurses were very effective in caring for student's health and well-being. They were proactive in collaborating with teachers to promote a strong awareness of healthy living in the curriculum.

The quality of support was outstanding. The high quality of care and support for students and their families was a significant feature of the school. Staff relationships with students were exceptionally warm, courteous, caring and considerate. Behaviour management was defined clearly and understood by all in the school. Staff systematically and effectively monitored the pastoral and academic progress of students. They provided excellent individual support and guidance. Systems to monitor students' attendance and punctuality were securely in place and prompt and decisive actions were taken when levels fell. Parents fully supported the importance of maintaining high levels of attendance and were immediately contacted if students failed to arrive in school when expected.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of school leadership was outstanding. The interim head teacher was an outstanding leader. During a period of significant change, she had provided stability and continuity with the effective support of other school leaders. She had identified key areas for improvement and had empowered subject leaders to ensure more consistent progress was made throughout the school. All staff were made aware of their responsibilities for school improvement and were held to account for progress. Their work was monitored

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and evaluated and advice and support were provided on how to improve. As a result, high standards had been maintained and, in some cases, raised. The leadership team liaised closely with the newly-appointed head teacher, who was due to start in the new school year, in order to sustain and extend improvements.

Self-evaluation and school improvement planning were good. The school had been successful in addressing some of the necessary improvements identified in the last inspection report such as improving students' learning skills and increasing progress in Islamic Education. All staff contributed to self-evaluation and were clear about their roles and responsibilities. Parents and students were consulted. Improvement plans identified actions to be taken in the key priorities, but anticipated outcomes in attainment and progress were not clearly defined especially in Arabic. Professional development was leading to an increase in the number of outstanding lessons in most subjects. Rigorous and accurate tracking of progress was very effective in most cases but was less secure in Arabic.

The partnership with parents and the community was outstanding. Parents were involved as equal partners and were supportive of the school. The Parent Teacher Association raised funds for school resources and for other worthwhile causes. Two-way communication systems were effective. Concerns and suggestions were acted upon appropriately. Parents appreciated students' progress reports. There were well-established links with the community.

Governance was outstanding. The school community was appropriately represented, consulted and informed. Governors supported and challenged school leaders in equal measure. They made wise choices about the direction they wished to go in and the personal qualities required of leaders to deliver their vision. They provided significant finances for maintenance and resources and had aspirations to provide education to higher age levels.

The management of staffing, facilities and resources was outstanding. Expectations for staff, students and parents were clear and adhered to. Buildings on both sites were accessible. Staff were well-qualified and there were high levels of additional adult support. Learning environments were attractive and well-maintained. Resources were plentiful and of high quality.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

Students with special educational needs were welcomed to the school's inclusive environment. Comprehensive training and well-established arrangements helped teachers to systematically identify the wide-ranging needs of students requiring additional support. The results of many diagnostic tests used after

a referral helped establish any specific need and an understanding of future strategies. All students with special educational needs had detailed educational plans (IEP) and next steps in learning were agreed with parents and shared with teachers. Parents were fully involved in all parts of the process including an integral part in the construction and development of a child's IEP. The Learning Support staff worked closely with subject teachers to ensure effective provision for all students to access the curriculum. The student IEP was used well to help teachers when planning lessons and providing activities to meet the needs of all learners. As a result of the integrated and highly effective support, students made at least good progress academically, socially and personally. Positive links with a range of outside agencies ensured that students received individual support during the school day and at other times. When students were withdrawn from lessons, for example to receive additional support, they made very good progress as a result of programmes provided for individuals and small groups. Students were made to feel secure, confident and valued and they were guided effectively. All members of the SEN team were fully qualified and led by a well-qualified co-ordinator. Other members of the team had significantly improved their skills and were using them very effectively in school.

How well does the school teach Arabic as a first language?

In the primary phase, teaching was adequate overall. Teachers had good subject knowledge. Lesson plans had clear objectives and were shared with students. A few teachers matched expectations to the range of abilities. In most lessons however, teachers often set low expectations for students and challenge was limited. Expectations and outcomes were better for the older students because of the range of activities and the better use of time. In most lessons teachers used a variety of resources and technology to support learning but interactions with students were limited to closed questions with students given insufficient time to think or to develop critical thinking. The curriculum in Arabic as a first language fulfilled the requirements of the Ministry of Education. Transition arrangements from year to year were adequate. Cross-curricular links were limited and not deliberately planned. There were too few additional activities to enhance learning and extend student's knowledge and understanding. The curriculum was not sufficiently modified to meet the different needs of all students especially those of higher ability. It did not include sufficient opportunities for students to develop the ability to use what they learnt to communicate orally or in writing.

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgements. A summary of the survey statistics and comments from those who responded to the survey follows:

Responses to the surveys			
Responses received	Number		Percentage
Parents	This year	154	33%
	Last year	208	43%
Teachers	28		57%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

A minority of parents completed surveys this year, a slightly smaller percentage than the previous year. Just over half of the teachers responded but no students were eligible to complete the survey. Almost all parents who responded were satisfied with the quality of education, teaching, the curriculum and with progress in the majority of subjects. They agreed with teachers that children were happy and safe in school that behaviour was good and that incidents of bullying were rare and dealt with effectively. Almost all agreed that provision for students with additional needs was a strength of the school and that children were well-prepared for the next stage of education. Teachers said they were involved in curriculum developments and believed the school was well-led although they felt they needed more time for preparation and planning. Both groups agreed that communication systems were very effective and that they were listened to. A few parents did not feel their children had a clear understanding of Islamic values in the UAE. A few parents expressed the need for more transparency from the governing body regarding future developments.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

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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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