

INSPECTION REPORT

Jumeira BaccaLaureate School

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Jumeira Bacallaureate School

Location	Jumeira 1
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jbschool.ae
Telephone	04-344 6931
Address	Street 53B off Al Wasl Road, Jumeira 1
Principal	Andrew Homden
Curriculum	IB
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	Pre-KG (Age 3 - 5) Primary (Age 6 - 11) MYP (Age 12 - 16)
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	475
Number of Emirati students	99 (21%)
Date of the inspection	Monday 13th to Wednesday 15th February 2012

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The context of the school

Jumeira Baccalaureate School had opened in September 2010, with around 80 primary students on roll. In September 2011 the Middle Years Programme (MYP) opened, admitting students into Grade 6 to 10. At the time of the inspection, there were 475 students on roll from pre-Kindergarten to Grade 10. The school followed the English Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in the pre-Kindergarten (KG) and KG1. The primary curriculum (Grades KG2 to Grade 5) was based on the English National Curriculum for English and mathematics, and the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) for other subjects. From Grades 6 to 10, students followed the MYP of the International Baccalaureate. There were 48 full-time teachers, including the Principal and senior management team. All teachers in the school had appropriate teaching qualifications. There were four classes in Phase 1 (pre KG and KG 1), 12 classes in Phase 2 and 10 tutor groups in Phase 3 (Grade 6 to 10). About a fifth of the students were Emirati. Staff turnover was relatively low. Almost all primary teachers had remained at the school since it opened, with 33 new teachers joining when the MYP opened.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Good

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

This was the first time the school had been inspected. The school provided a good quality of education. Under the highly effective leadership of the Principal and senior management team, there was a common drive for improvement and much had been achieved in the first 18 months of the school's life. An extremely harmonious community of students and staff from over 40 different countries had been established. This was much appreciated by parents. Effective teaching engaged and motivated students in most lessons and enabled them to make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Their engagement and enthusiasm was not as strong in Islamic Education and Arabic, and progress in these subjects was only acceptable. A good start had been made in developing assessment systems but the use of assessment in planning lessons was inconsistent. Staff knew individual students and their needs well. As a result, students at an early stage of learning English and those with specific learning needs were quickly identified and provided with good support. Liaison between phases was strong in mathematics and

science but not in other subjects. This meant that the staff was sometimes unaware of what had been covered beforehand or what was to follow. Outstanding partnerships with parents and the wider community made a valuable contribution to students' learning and personal development.

Key strengths

- Students made good progress in English, mathematics and science;
- The school was a harmonious community where students from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds enjoyed very good relationships;
- Students developed an enthusiasm for learning in most subjects as a result of good teaching;
- Staff knew individual students well and took care to identify their specific language and learning needs;
- The Principal and senior management team provided effective leadership and, with the support of the Board, had established a common sense of purpose and drive for improvement.

Recommendations

- Accelerate the progress students make in Islamic Education and Arabic so that it is in line with other key subjects;
- Ensure assessment procedures and the use of assessment in planning lessons are consistent across all subjects;
- Extend opportunities for students to develop their independence and creativity through open-ended and investigative learning activities;
- Improve liaison between curriculum leaders in the primary and MYP phases in order to ensure continuity in learning as students move through the school.

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

	Pre-KG	Primary	MYP
Islamic Education			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language			
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English			
Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics			
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good	Good
Science			
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Good	Good

Attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic was acceptable. At a level appropriate to their age, the majority of students could recite the prescribed chapters of the Holy Qur'an with satisfactory pronunciation. They had a sound knowledge of the Islamic principles and of the meaning of the verses of Holy Qur'an. Although most students studying Arabic as their first language were able to speak using simple phrases, they had difficulty in expressing an opinion. Primary students taking Arabic as an additional language identified most Arabic letters and their sounds. Students could hold brief conversations. In MYP, students' reading skills were limited to familiar words and sentences, and students had difficulty in writing more than a few simple sentences. In English, children in Kindergarten had a very secure grasp of letters and sounds and most were able to write three-letter words independently, reflecting their good attainment. Levels of attainment in Primary and MYP were acceptable. Students had the expected speaking and reading skills, although they were less confident in writing, and their handwriting was generally weak. In mathematics, attainment was good in Kindergarten and the primary department and acceptable in MYP. In mathematics, children's number skills in Kindergarten and the primary department were above expectations. In MYP, students generally worked above expected standards in number and algebra but there were gaps in their knowledge and understanding in other aspects of mathematics. In science, kindergarten children knew topics such as waterproofing and the natural world and they could classify accurately. Most primary students understood about forces and habitats. In MYP, most students attained an acceptable standard in biology, chemistry and physics.

Progress was acceptable across the school in Islamic Education and in both aspects of Arabic. In these subjects, students' progress in deepening their understanding and skills was constrained due a lack of challenge in most lessons. Students were making good progress in English, mathematics and science. Their reading and writing skills were developing quickly and they could analyse text with increasing confidence. Similarly, students' confidence in number skills was growing, although progress in applying these when solving problems was slower. In science, kindergarten children made good progress in using their senses to explore their environment. Primary students developed a good understanding of a fair test. The majority of MYP students made good gains in their understanding of scientific investigations, especially in biology and chemistry.

Emirati students were making progress in line with other students across all subjects. When classes were divided into ability groups, each group typically included Emiratis. There was a higher proportion of Emirati students in the younger classes. Most of them were at an early stage of learning English. They were making good and often exceptional progress in speaking and understanding their teachers and classmates. They were also making good progress in early reading and writing skills and gaining increasing confidence in numeracy. Older students were working at a similar pace to their peers.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Pre-KG	Primary	MYP
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good	Good	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good

Students showed genuine respect for each other, supporting those with language, learning or medical needs. The youngest children quickly developed an enthusiasm for learning and settled very quickly. Across the school students developed a good awareness of a healthy lifestyle and promoted this in their discussions. Attendance was acceptable overall and students arrived punctually for lessons. In the secondary section, a few students had a poorer attitude to completing their work in some subjects and they were sometimes too passive in their learning. Students demonstrated a good understanding of Islam and its impact on the modern society in Dubai. They respected and displayed a good understanding of the local traditions and heritage. They had a clear understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai, as well as their own culture and other cultures around the world. The students had good understanding of their responsibilities as members of the school. They knew how Dubai had developed and understood some reasons for the changes in Dubai and the other Emirates. They cared for their school environment; for example by recycling plastic, paper and batteries across the school. They kept the school clean and tidy.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-KG	Primary	MYP
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good

Teaching for effective learning was good throughout the school. Relationships in almost all lessons were constructive and teachers engendered a love of learning. Most teachers had strong subject knowledge and understood that students learn in a variety of ways. They planned according to the range of students' needs using a variety of resources, including technology, to enhance and enrich learning. Language development was a priority in all lessons. The majority of teachers displayed and discussed learning objectives with the students at the start of each lesson to help them understand how to be successful learners. They valued and displayed students' work. In the best lessons, teachers acted as facilitators enabling students to learn independently and collaboratively. The majority of teachers asked increasingly difficult questions to challenge students' thinking. In some lessons, however, particularly in Islamic Education and Arabic, the questions posed were too easy and did not help students to develop higher order and critical thinking skills.

The quality of students' learning was good in all phases. Almost all students were enthusiastic learners. They responded well in most lessons especially when they involved practical activities. This was evident in key subjects and some good examples were seen also in art, music and physical education. Students were confident working independently and enjoyed sharing ideas with their classmates. Most students could see the relevance of their learning in their daily lives. For example, in science they learned about water purification. Their skills in problem-solving were less well developed in mathematics. Although students usually completed their homework, they were not always accustomed to carrying out research independently. Also, they were not used to reflecting critically on what they had learnt to help them improve. In a minority of lessons students were passive especially when their teachers dominated the lessons or when language was a barrier to learning.

Assessment procedures were good in all phases. Even though the majority of students had only recently joined the school, almost all teachers already knew them well through regular assessment in lessons. The most effective teachers used this information to adapt their plans in order to extend learning for all students. Students were encouraged to assess their own work against agreed criteria, although this practice was not consistently established. In some lessons, students' review of their work merely stated that they found it too easy or too difficult. Students' work was regularly marked but the quality of the feedback was variable in giving clear guidance on how to improve. Subject leaders made use of assessment data to track progress over time. This was not as effective as it might have been to evaluate the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all students.

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

	Pre-KG	Primary	MYP
Curriculum quality	Good	Good	Good

The school had established a comprehensive, balanced curriculum for all phases in a short time. There was a strong commitment to English literacy and mother tongue maintenance across the school; however, in Arabic, there was often a lack of challenge and too little attention to reading and writing. In the primary section, cross-curricular links were being developed through IPC units of work and the IB MYP provided a good structure for curriculum organisation. However, subject links were not always explicit in curriculum planning. In science and mathematics, teachers were working to ensure consistency within and between the phases, but this level of cooperation was not evident in other key subjects. Staff acknowledged that overviews of the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be learned in each subject in each year level would greatly facilitate overall curriculum planning. There were good opportunities for teachers to plan together and review the curriculum, but some plans did not identify specific opportunities for students' independent learning, research and critical thinking. Extensive extra-curricular activities, competitions, field trips, camps, community and service activities provided valuable enrichment for students' learning and personal development. MYP students benefited from excellent pastoral care sessions which looked at topical issues and which allowed participation in an extensive range of environmental activities.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-KG	Primary	MYP
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good

The school had established highly effective arrangements for ensuring students' safety. All gates were well protected by guards and CCTV cameras. There were efficient arrangements for ensuring students' safety when using school transport. The school premises, equipment and resources were well suited to the educational needs of all students. Guidance for emergency evacuations and fire drills was stated clearly. Most of the staff had first aid training. Teachers modeled safe practices. For example, in science they wore goggles and ensured that students took action to minimize risks. Medication was kept in a locked cabinet. Healthy living was promoted well by offering a good range of physical education and sport. Child protection arrangements were understood by all staff.

The quality of support and care for students was good. The inclusive ethos and consistent high expectations of behaviour promoted very positive relationships between students and staff. Students with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language made progress similar to other students as a result of early identification of their needs and targeted support. The school provided useful workshops and seminars for older students to support them in their choice of career and for further study. Systems for monitoring punctuality and attendance, and to follow up unexplained absences had been established, although these were not yet fully effective in producing good attendance rates.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

The quality of leadership was good. The principal and senior management team had a shared vision and a common determination to provide the best possible education within an international context. There was a strong ethos of collective responsibility. Subject leaders shared the ambition for school improvement and most provided very good role models for colleagues in their teaching. Well-established links between the primary and MYP sections in mathematics and science had resulted in planning that took account of the need for continuity and progression between the phases. Successful teaching approaches were increasingly shared across all phases. However, such close liaison between leaders was not evident in all subjects.

Rigorous self-evaluation by senior leaders of the school's performance provided a very secure basis for development planning. The monitoring of teaching and learning, through lesson observations, looking at students' work and gathering feedback from students and parents, was well established. Information from such activities was used to provide action plans that identified clear priorities. Assessment data was beginning to be analysed in order to identify trends in students' performance, although this was not fully embedded across all subjects.

Parents held the school in high regard. Every effort was made to engage with parents and to elicit their support. For example, every week, around 30 parents helped with reading in the kindergarten classes. Parents felt extremely welcome and much appreciated the school's open door policy. A strong and active parents and friends association contributed to their feeling of belonging and sense of community. Excellent communication systems, including a weekly update about the activities in MYP, kept them well informed.

Parents appreciated the many meetings that were arranged to keep them up to date about the school's approach to the curriculum and with its development. They received very good feedback, through written reports and consultation meetings about how their children were progressing and how they could support their children's learning at home. Extensive links with local businesses and charities had already been established, and full advantage was taken of the associated network of schools in sharing good practice and arranging further professional development.

Governance was good. Members of the governing board were clear about their roles in supporting and guiding the school, at the same time holding it to account. They understood that their responsibilities did not include day-to-day management. Some members had high levels of expertise and experience in education. This enabled them to make valuable contributions to self-evaluation, monitoring, target setting and professional development. Although parents were not directly involved in the governing board, they felt they had a channel for their views to be heard and were extremely positive about their involvement in setting out the school's vision. An advisory board was being set up to provide a regular forum for discussion between parents and the board.

The operational management of the school was good and school leaders made effective and efficient use of resources. All staff were appropriately qualified and benefited from well-focused additional training. All areas were accessible to students, including those with additional needs. The spacious and very well-stocked library was used effectively to promote students' reading skills and their interest in books and provided a good range of information books to their support work across the curriculum.

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	151	39%
	Last year	The school was not inspected in 2010-2011	
Teachers	32		60%
Students	20		61%

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

A significant minority of parents responded to the survey. They were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They were particularly pleased with the inclusive atmosphere, and the fact that their children had opportunities to make relationships with children from a wide range of countries and cultural backgrounds. They were pleased with the fact that the school respected and promoted mother tongue languages. The views of staff were similarly positive. They felt valued and expressed a strong commitment to the school. They praised the opportunities provided for further professional development. Students were very positive about their relationships with staff. They said the teaching was good overall. They were happy with the range of extra-curricular activities. They felt that bullying was rare and, if it did occur, it was dealt with promptly and fairly.

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.

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

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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