

**Jumeirah English Speaking School  
(Arabian Ranches Branch)  
Inspection Report**

**Foundation to Year 13**

**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.

Jumeirah English Speaking School (Branch) was inspected in October 2009 as part of the regular inspection of all schools in Dubai. The inspection covered key aspects of the work of the school at all stages. It evaluated students' achievements, the effectiveness of the school, the environment for learning, the school's processes for self-evaluation and capacity for improvement. There was a particular focus on students' progress in Islamic Education (for Muslim students), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

### Basic information about the school

Located in Arabian Ranches, Jumeirah English Speaking School (Branch), is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Foundation to Year 13, aged three to 18 years. The school follows a UK curriculum to the end of Key Stage 4, when the students are 16. In the sixth form the school offers the International Baccalaureate (IB). At the time of the inspection, there were 1,214 students on roll. The school had recently started running the IB and there was a cohort of Year 12 students, but none in Year 13. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents were overwhelmingly supportive of the school; few had any negative comments or observations. Almost all parents agreed that their children liked school, that the teaching was good, that their children were treated fairly and that they were being encouraged to become independent and responsible people. Parents liked the range of activities available to their children and nearly all agreed that they were comfortable approaching the school with any questions or complaints and that the school would act promptly to address any issues. They felt that their children were well cared for and that teachers were good at explaining to parents what they could do at home to help with their children's work. Local community links were thought to be good, and almost all parents felt that the school had responded positively to the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Parents were very happy with their children's progress in all subjects except for Islamic Education and Arabic, where many parents were unsure of progress. However, several parents commented that the teaching of Arabic had improved significantly this year.

## How well does the school perform overall?

Jumeirah English Speaking School at Arabian Ranches was a good school with many outstanding features. Students' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science in Foundation and primary phases were outstanding. In the primary phase, however, attainment and progress in Arabic were unsatisfactory and, although attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable, progress was not. In the secondary phase, attainment was good in English, and outstanding in mathematics and science. Progress was good in each of these subjects. In Islamic Education and Arabic, progress was acceptable but in Islamic Education attainment was unsatisfactory. At the time of the inspection, a few weeks into the post-16 courses, progress was acceptable in English mathematics and science, and attainment was good in mathematics and science. Students' personal and social development was outstanding. The young people of all ages were polite and welcoming at all times, they had well-developed views about their civic responsibilities and about the nature of Dubai and the contributions which they could make to its continuing prosperity. Rates of attendance were high, but there were several instances of poor punctuality and time-keeping leading to some disruption at the start of a few lessons.

Teaching was outstanding. It was at its best at the Foundation Stage and primary phase and in science and mathematics in the lessons seen with secondary age students. The quality of teaching in Islamic Education and Arabic was, however, frequently unsatisfactory and not up to the standard enjoyed by students elsewhere in the curriculum. In other subjects too there were occasional instances of teaching that was not sufficiently well planned in order to maximise learning. Most students' learning was, nevertheless, of outstanding quality with strong motivation and a commitment to excellence evident in many lessons. Students were developing their independence and research skills at all levels. Those who had just recently commenced their studies on the IB course were starting to extend their capacities for critical thinking and independent enquiry. The school was rich in data and students' performance was frequently analysed to check on progress. The regular day-to-day marking and assessment feedback to students was not of the same high quality and lacked rigour. Many aspects of the curriculum were outstanding, especially at the Foundation Stage and primary phase. It had good breadth and balance with an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities to challenge, excite and develop the students' skills. The arrangements to ensure the health, safety and security of all members of the school community were outstanding with a full-time nurse on site and many ancillary and support workers providing an excellent service. The students were well supported regarding their personal and developmental needs.

Many aspects of the leadership and management were outstanding, but aspects of continuity and progression through the school were limited due to the fact that the primary and secondary phases were managed separately. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and marking was only acceptable overall, due to the wide disparity between the arrangements in primary and secondary phases. Links with parents were outstanding as was the governance of the school. The governors met regularly, they were representative of all relevant stakeholders and held the school to account for its performance. The staffing, facilities and resources of the school were mostly of high quality and contributed significantly to the learning experience and the positive school ethos. The school delivered well on its stated aims and objectives, and demonstrated capacity for further improvement.

## Key features of the school

- The outstanding provision and learning outcomes at the Foundation Stage and primary phase;
- The outstanding attainment in English, mathematics and science at primary phases and in mathematics and science at the secondary phases;
- The curriculum quality, breadth, balance and outstanding extra-curricular opportunities throughout the school;
- The outstanding quality and excellent arrangements which helped ensure students' protection and support;
- The excellent facilities and resources for learning;
- Students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic were not consistently acceptable across the school.

## Recommendations

- Raise levels of attainment and progress throughout the school in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Improve transition arrangements between the primary and secondary phases, so that the teachers in secondary phase take good account of the students' current knowledge and their prior learning;
- Take steps to ensure that secondary-aged students are better prepared for their move onto the IB programme;
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of the school's work so that there is more consistency and that the professional practice in the secondary phase reaches the same levels of excellence evident in the primary phase;

- Improve the arrangement for assessment at the secondary phase so that students are given more information about their progress through, for example, a more consistent approach to the regular marking of their work.

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

In Islamic Education, the overall attainment for non-Arabic speaking students in the primary phase was acceptable. Progress over time, however, was unsatisfactory for the majority of students. The majority of students in Years 1 and 2 made acceptable progress with a very basic knowledge of a few Islamic greetings and facts. However, from Year 3 onwards, limited progress was made in developing students' understanding of those facts and of Islamic values and principles. Students' Qur'anic recitation skills were underdeveloped. In the secondary phase, levels of attainment for the majority of non-Arabic speaking students were unsatisfactory, although the majority of students were observed to be making acceptable progress with their understanding of Islamic values and developing a more detailed knowledge of Islamic practices. In the case of the very small number of Arab Muslim students registered in Islamic Education classes, students' current levels of attainment and their progress were unsatisfactory across the whole school.

In Arabic as an additional language, students' current levels of attainment and the progress in the primary phase were both unsatisfactory. Only a few students made acceptable progress with their reading and writing of Arabic letters, cursive script and letter sounds; they knew a very limited number of high frequency words and familiar phrases. Similarly, by the end of the primary phase, only a few students could identify and use the expected range of words and phrases. However, in the secondary phase, almost all students of Arabic as an additional language made good progress with their reading, writing and listening skills and acceptable progress with their speaking skills; their overall attainment was acceptable. Only a very small number of Arab students studied Arabic as a first language in the primary phase and in secondary Years 7 to 9. Their levels of attainment and their progress were unsatisfactory.

Attainment and progress in English overall was good. Children in the Foundation Stage made outstanding progress in speaking and listening. By the second year, many knew their letters, read and wrote key words. By Year 6 attainment and progress were outstanding. Virtually all reached the UK national benchmarks, and about half exceeded them. Students had wide vocabularies, used open questions to elicit information and researched diligently to gather information. Most wrote well-structured sentences in neat cursive script. In the secondary phase attainment and progress were good. Year 9 students wrote vividly in the first person as soldiers in the trenches in World War 1, selecting vocabulary for their audience. Results in the school's first GCSE English examination and current standards in Year 11 were good. Standards in the recently-launched Year 12 were acceptable. Higher achieving students used appropriate language and quotations when reviewing literary texts although a lack of analytical skills in the early stage of the course restricted the progress of a minority of students.

Attainment in mathematics was outstanding at Foundation Stage, primary and secondary phases, and it was good at post-16. In National Curriculum tests and at GCSE it was well above UK and international averages. Progress in mathematics in Foundation Stage and primary phase was outstanding. Children confidently displayed high levels of understanding and application of numeracy and shape, discovered through play and practical activities. By the end of the primary phase, students displayed excellent mental agility. They could solve simple algebraic equations and describe the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. They could gather and interpret data and enjoyed solving open-ended problems. Progress in secondary phase was good and most students understood and could apply the algebraic formulae necessary to find the two solutions of a quadratic equation. At post-16, current attainment was good and progress was acceptable. Students were developing their understanding and manipulation of arithmetic and geometric progressions.

Attainment in science was outstanding in the Foundation Stage, primary and secondary phases and it was good in the recently established Year 12. By the end of the primary phase, students attained well-above average in National Curriculum tests and similarly outstanding results were obtained in the GCSE examinations at the end of the secondary phase. In the Foundation Stage, children made excellent progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through discovery and exploration. This progress was continued and demonstrated by the high standard of students' work displayed in the primary classrooms and in science workbooks. By Year 6, students had developed a scientific vocabulary and were confident in carrying out investigations. Progress was maintained in the secondary phase with students becoming more self-assured and using their own knowledge and skills in handling scientific apparatus during practical work. Most students in Year 7 could explain the difference between mass and weight. Students often exceeded the expected UK National Curriculum levels throughout the secondary years and by the end of Year 10 were ready to take the GCSE science one year early. Progress in the first weeks of the IB Diploma was acceptable.

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were, for the most part, outstanding. They were proud of their school and had positive relationships with their teachers and with others. They were mature and self-disciplined and worked well both together and independently. They had confidence in their teachers and, consequently, grew in confidence. Attendance and punctuality were good especially in the primary phase although in the secondary phase and at post-16, a few students arrived late and unprepared.

Overall, students had a good understanding and appreciation of Islam. They recognised the significance of fasting during Ramadan and many knew about the Pillars of Islam. Students were positive about the multicultural nature of Dubai and recognised how this had enriched

their lives. They learned about traditional homes and costumes through history projects and displays about Dubai.

Students were developing into conscientious citizens. Younger students showed respect for the National Anthem and when the flag was flying. Older students collected clothes for the needy of Dubai and sent clothes and rice to the Philippines. They understood how Dubai had developed over time. Their awareness of local and global issues was excellent and they spoke with feeling about pollution on the beaches and the impact on marine life caused by recent off-shore residential developments. One student had carried out research into the environmental impact of residential property development. Even younger ones knew about the impact of pollution on air quality.

## How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching in all parts of the school was good, with many examples of outstanding practice at all phases. In the Foundation Stage several examples of exemplary professional practice were observed; here excellent planning and sophisticated strategies served to meet the needs of all children and students. There were, though, examples of outstanding teaching at all phases, with teachers making effective use of a wide range of resources for learning, including information and communication technology (ICT), to promote effective learning. There was, nonetheless, a significant proportion of lessons in Islamic Education and Arabic where the teaching was unsatisfactory. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory teachers' planning was poor, lessons did not take sufficient account of the full range of learners' needs, and time management was insecure.

The quality of students' learning mirrored the successful teaching. The learning was almost invariably outstanding at the Foundation Stage and primary phase. Students displayed maturity and independence in their approach to their work and used resources to good effect. In the secondary and post-16 phases the learning was usually at least good and often outstanding. Towards the end of the secondary phase, and in the post 16 phase, students' higher order thinking was developing. For example, in English, Grade 9 students learned to analyse Brooke's poem, "The Soldier" and Grade 11 students extended their evaluative vocabulary by analysis of persuasive writing. However science investigations did not always support development of thinking skills. For example, Grade 11 students did not intuitively link cause and effect when monitoring changes in heart and breathing rates as a result of physical exercise, and Grade 12 students using data-loggers did not think through the relevance of the information they were entering.

In common with the quality of teaching and learning, standards of marking and assessment in the Foundation Stage and primary phase were outstanding. Assessment to promote effective learning was an intrinsic part of the primary team's professional practice. In the secondary and post-16 phases, although the overall picture was good, with much performance data gathered through regular testing, the assessment processes were not being used sufficiently to inform



planning. Data analysis was not taking place with enough rigour. Since the standard of marking of the students' workbooks was inconsistent between and within departments, students were not being helped to improve their work through regular accurate feedback. Teachers' knowledge of students' strengths and weaknesses at an individual level was not being used to provide a degree of personal feedback for all students.

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

The curriculum was good. The school followed the UK Early Years programme and National Curriculum from Foundation to Year 11. Primary children learned Arabic and French. Grouped options after Year 9 maintained a balanced curriculum to Year 11. The school had made significant improvements to its Arabic and Islamic Studies provision since the last inspection, but not all groups received the full time allocation required by the Ministry of Education. All sections regularly evaluated their curriculum. Students with learning needs were identified and supported in class or in the learning support departments. Transfer arrangements from primary to secondary included exchange of information, data and work samples, but full use was not always made of these records at the secondary level; at best, these guided and supported the class allocation with the intention of smoothing transfer from primary to secondary. The school had recently introduced the IB post-16. To improve students' transfer at this stage in their education, inspection evidence revealed the need to strengthen, in the upper secondary phase, specific subject knowledge and skills and the language needed to communicate these. Cross-curricular activities were well integrated into learning in both schools and particularly well supported by the school's wide options in art and technology. Paintings, paper sculptures and architectural drawings supported learning about Dubai. Preparation of biographies, for example, of Ghandi in Year 6, enhanced wider knowledge. Students from primary to Year 12 enjoyed an outstanding choice of extra-curricular activities. Sports and team games, choir, drama productions and camping in the desert as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award helped keep them fit and provided enjoyment. Approximately one third of the students received tuition in a range of musical instruments. Fitness training, running and swimming occurred before school. The provision of late buses enabled good after-school participation.

## How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for protecting students were outstanding. All staff were well-rehearsed in the emergency procedures and all adhered to the policies for health and safety. Transport arrangements and the systems for students entering and leaving the school were coordinated and supervised by guards who monitored the entrances at critical times of the day. Buildings and facilities, including toilets, were well-maintained. Teaching areas in the Foundation and primary classrooms were clean, bright, spacious, and airy. Apparatus, equipment and materials, such as chemicals, were checked and stored safely. Laboratory technicians were qualified to handle potentially dangerous substances and science teachers had undergone First Response training. Healthy lifestyles were promoted through the curriculum, the snacks on

offer in the cafeteria and the extensive programme of sport and activities out of school. The school's nursing team was active in giving additional support and guidance. Careers guidance was available to all students from Year 9 upwards. Child protection arrangements were clear and understood by parents, students and teachers. Students and parents were well informed about safe internet practices which were regularly reviewed in ICT classes and by the librarians.

The quality of support for students was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and the primary phase. It was good in the secondary phase and acceptable in the post-16 phase. Staff provided excellent role-models and relationships were positive. In the primary school, students respected and cared for each other and the school's positive approach ensured that behaviour was outstanding. However, in the higher year groups, including the post-16 stages, lateness for classes sometimes went unchallenged by their teachers. There were well-developed systems for data-analysis, tracking students' progress and providing additional support where necessary in most subjects, though the data were not always used to best effect. Guidance and provision for students with additional learning needs were still under development. Attendance figures were within the range expected. Students reported that they felt safe in school and that teachers provided outstanding support.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership overall was good and many aspects were outstanding. The overarching vision for the family of Jumeirah English Speaking Schools was ambitious, clear and well articulated. At its heart was a firm commitment towards excellence and high achievement for all. Professional competence and a commitment to continuous improvement were strong features of the two leadership teams on the Arabian Ranches campus. The impact of these teams was most evident for the parts of the school catering for youngest children and those of primary school age. Here there were strong and well-established professional relationships which resulted in successful team operation at all levels. In the secondary and later phases, the rapid growth in staff and student numbers in recent years, as the school had been growing towards its full capacity, meant that many management structures were at an early stage of development. One consequence of this was inconsistency between the professional practice within and between departments.

Just as with the leadership and management arrangements the systems for self-evaluation and feedback leading to continuous improvement were at their best in the primary phase and Foundation Stage. Here close-knit teams of teachers worked well, and in an integrated way, to ensure all children and students were suitably challenged and guided towards excellence. Despite the virtually autonomous operation of the two parts of the school, however, the overall response to the recommendations from the previous inspection report had been unified and broadly effective. Further improvements, though, were still needed in the provision for Islamic Education and for Arabic; moreover, self-evaluation systems in the secondary school were not fully effective in ensuring consistency and excellence. Only in the areas of music and

physical education were there vertical integration of staffing and, to an extent, curricula, so that there could be seamless progression from the beginning to the end of students' schooling.

Partnerships with parents and the local community were outstanding with all parents fully engaged with their children's education. Many parents were involved with the wider life of the school through social activities. Links with local industry were also good with many high-quality placements being available for the older students to experience the world of work.

Arrangements for governance were outstanding, with all relevant stakeholders being fully represented. Governors held the school fully to account and their regular meetings were well informed by the schools' director.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. Except in the areas of Islamic Education and Arabic, the staff were all well-qualified and suitably experienced. The facilities and the resources were of outstanding quality and contributed very significantly to the educational experience of all members of the school community.

## Summary of inspection judgements

In their evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the college, the inspection team made judgements about the following aspects of the college's performance.

Four descriptors are: Outstanding; Good; Acceptable; Unsatisfactory.

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Acceptable
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Acceptable

How good is the students' personal and social development?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are teaching and learning?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

How well does the school protect and support students?				
Age group:	Foundation	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Acceptable

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Good

## Next Steps

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

## How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact: [inspection@khda.gov.ae](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae).

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae).

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