

INSPECTION REPORT

Jumeirah English Speaking School

Report published in April 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Jumeirah English Speaking School

Location	Al Safa
Type of school	Private
Website	www.jess.sch.ae
Telephone	04 3945515
Address	Jumeirah Safa- P.O.BOX:24942
Principal	Ruth Mary Burke
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-11 / Foundation Stage 1-Year 6
Attendance	Outstanding
Number of students on roll	700
Largest nationality group of Students	UK
Number of Emirati students	7 (1%)
Date of the inspection	28th to 30th October

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The context of the school

Jumeirah English Speaking School (JESS), located in Al Safa, provided education for students from three to 11 years of age. Children of Kindergarten age followed the Foundation Stage curriculum. Students followed the English National Curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6, and many then transferred to the partner school, JESS Arabian Ranches. Both schools had the same Director of Education and Governing Body. The Headteacher led a senior team of two Deputy Headteachers and an Assistant Headteacher. The school had 54 teachers, all suitably qualified, and 21 teaching assistants. A majority of children and students were of UK background. The other students came from around 40 different countries. The school had identified 81 students with special educational needs, of whom 52 were gifted or talented students. Some students received support in classes or in one-to-one sessions from the 'Oasis' learning support team. One percent, of the student population were Emiratis.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Outstanding

Key strengths

- Innovative and successful leadership at all levels
- The school was a vibrant learning community, based on successful partnerships between students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents.
- Outstanding attainment and progress in many aspects of children's and students' work, including the development of their personal, social and learning skills.
- The imaginative and very well designed curriculum, which included exceptional use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and development of enquiry and critical thinking skills.
- The successful implementation of the school's principle that every child is special, and the resulting care and support children and students received for their health, wellbeing and academic success.
- The outstanding facilities and resources, which were fully utilised to inspire children and students to reach the highest standards of achievement.

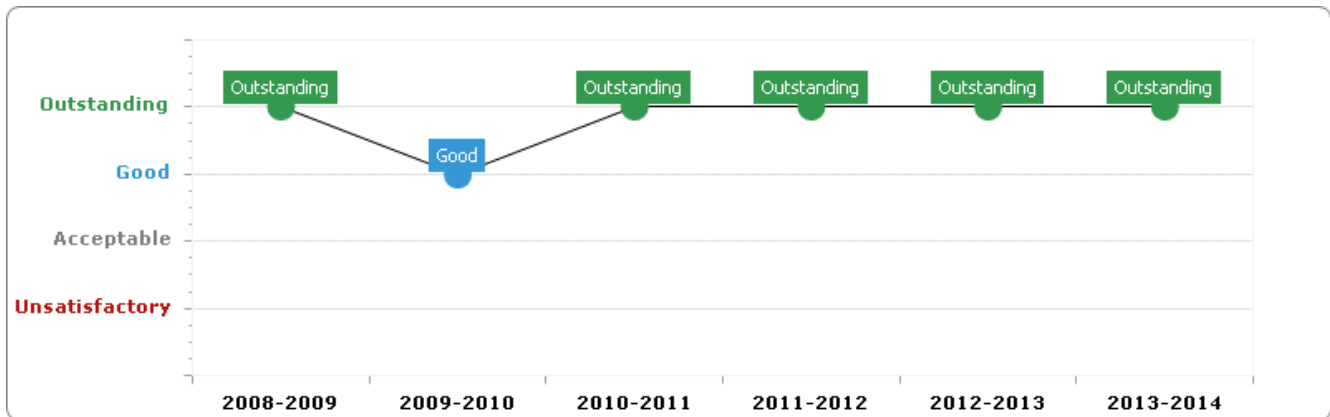
Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic by introducing more challenge and interest, higher expectations, and more opportunities for speaking, where appropriate.

Progress since the last inspection

- Staff had worked hard and with success to maintain high standards and to improve further many aspects of the outstanding provision in the school.
- There have been improvements in attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic.
- Staff had extended the outstanding practice in tracking students' progress in the main subjects to all other subjects. Teachers in those subjects now had a more focused and detailed knowledge of the progress of individual students.
- Improved further the already outstanding curriculum by offering more and higher quality opportunities for students to apply English and mathematics skills across all subjects.

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	Good
Arabic as an additional language		
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Good
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	Outstanding
Assessment	Outstanding	Outstanding

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
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	Outstanding
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 was outstanding in English, mathematics and science, and acceptable in Islamic Education, Arabic as a first language and Arabic as an additional language. Most students had age-appropriate knowledge of concepts such as Tawheed and the pillars of Islam. Memorisation and recitation of the Holy Quran were less developed. In Arabic as a first language, most students had adequate listening, spelling and reading skills. Speaking and writing skills were weaker. In Arabic as an additional language, most students knew an appropriate range of vocabulary and common phrases and expressions. However, their ability to use their vocabulary to express their ideas was limited. Children at foundation stage were attaining well above expected levels in English. They spoke confidently and listened well. Most could read simple books and were beginning to write simple sentences by Foundation Stage 2. All aspects of English were strong in the primary stage. Students' skilled talking and listening complemented their strong reading and writing skills. In mathematics, most children at Foundation Stage showed ability beyond expectations in counting and ordering numbers. Primary stage students applied their well-developed understanding, for example in shape and measurement, when solving problems. In science, children in foundation stage were able to take part confidently in guided and free play investigations, observing changes and commenting on what had happened. In the primary stage, students used skills well in investigations. They showed a good understanding of the properties of materials and the characteristics of electricity.

Progress was good in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language and Arabic as an additional language. There was outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. A majority of students made better than expected progress in their knowledge and understanding of Islamic values and etiquettes. In Arabic as a first language, a majority of students were making good progress improving their listening, speaking and reading skills, but progress in independent writing was significantly slower. In Arabic as an additional language, a majority of students made good progress improving their vocabulary and their listening skills, but their progress in speaking and writing was slow. Students made outstanding progress in English becoming increasingly skilled in their writing and speaking skills producing accurate and clearly expressed presentations. In the primary phase, students used appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning, even when the spelling may have been challenging or uncertain. By year 6, students writing was characterised by technical accuracy, wide vocabulary and sustained adherence to genre conventions. Foundation stage children learned progressively to order numbers and objects of different size and to explain their thinking. Primary students rapidly developed their abilities to solve mathematical challenges and, through practical learning, were developing excellent understanding of real-life applications. In the foundation stage, children were developing scientific skills of experimentation and describing what they saw. Primary students made very good progress in understanding the scientific process.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

The quality of learning skills was outstanding. They enthusiastically engaged in their learning because it was very often practical and therefore meaningful. When given opportunities, they relished taking responsibility for their own learning and were exceptionally mature in doing so. Their remarkable collaboration made a significant contribution to learning across many subjects, for example in science, where they took on the role of group leaders during research activities. In mathematics collaboration was of the highest order in adding numbers and working in groups to devise investigations. Almost all students enjoyed Arabic and were able to reflect on their learning. Students readily made links between different subjects and areas of learning, and ably applied their skills and understanding to real life situations, such as when planning a complex journey. They made clear links between history and science, for example, when studying aspects of World War 2 in Year 6. Their exceptionally creative use of mobile technology promoted extremely effective acquisition of research and enquiry skills. Students successfully learned the skills of how to learn independently, including effective reflection on their own learning, and this stood them in very good stead for their future development.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The quality of students' personal and social development was outstanding. Staff, students and parents were involved in an educational partnership based on mutual respect and positive relationships. Children at foundation stage were able to take responsibility for their belongings, and showed a mature attitude towards independent work. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school was exemplary. They showed very positive attitudes towards learning, and responded very well to the many opportunities they were afforded to take responsibility and show leadership. They were confident and self-reliant. Almost all were able to make wise choices about healthy eating and exercise. Attendance was outstanding. From foundation stage onwards, students showed respectful understanding of the importance of the tenets of Islam to daily life in Dubai. Older students had researched intensively the UAE's mercantile history and pearl-fishing origins, and charted its modern economic development. They greatly appreciated the multi-cultural society of Dubai and had enjoyed explaining the culture and history of their own 'home' nations to one another on the school's inaugural International Day.

Students were highly responsible citizens, enthusiastically taking on responsibility from the wide range of opportunities that the school provided, such as being 'tech leaders' to support their peers' use of technology. Students had an exceptionally positive work ethic, imaginatively taking the initiative in deciding the direction of their work. They made recommendations for school improvement such as the suggestion to provide more

shaded areas, and they were involved in community projects in Dubai and the wider world that focus on environmental issues and support for charities.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was outstanding across the Foundation Stage and the primary stage. From the start of Foundation to the end of primary, teachers' highly skilled lesson planning ensured that children and students' knowledge and understanding grew securely alongside their acquisition of important skills for learning. Teachers had the highest ambitions for every learner, and from the earliest stages onwards, regularly and acutely questioned students to bring out the very best in their thinking. They frequently linked learning inside and outdoors to its applications in daily life, for example through setting up role-play exercises in various subjects. Teachers' very creative use of resources including Information Technology (IT), frequently brought learning vibrantly to life, for example in studying World War 2. Such cross-curricular projects increasingly helped students apply what they learned in other subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants worked together closely to support everyone's learning. In a very few lessons arrangements for different groups of students were insufficiently challenging. Teaching in art, music, IT and physical education was outstanding overall, with varied opportunities for students' creativity, and very high expectations of their performance.

Assessment arrangements across Foundation Stage and primary stage were outstanding. On children's entry to Foundation stage, staff quickly assembled accurate profiles of starting points from which to gauge progress in learning. Rigorous tracking and monitoring of attainment thereafter, across the whole school, provided accurate and timely information by which to measure further progress. Senior staff and teachers used this information to plan lessons comprehensively to meet the learning needs of all students. Building on existing strengths, the school had refined online assessment to ensure quicker intervention to support and extend the learning of particular groups. In lessons, most teachers skilfully questioned students to ascertain their understanding. Teachers' oral and written feedback on students' performance quickly recognised success and identified necessary improvements. Older students' strengths in assessing their own and their peers' learning further contributed to their well-informed awareness of their own strengths and areas to improve.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum and its design to meet the individual needs of students was outstanding at both stages. The rationale for the curriculum entitled 'Achieving Excellence Together' and the key curriculum characteristics of caring, reflection, enquiry, and communication were well understood by all, and were implemented very effectively. The core subjects were augmented by high quality provision in ICT, music, physical education, art, and French in primary years 5 and 6. Staff monitored and reviewed the curriculum well to ensure that there was continuity and progression from the start of Foundation Stage onwards. Staff had improved the development of literacy and numeracy skills in meaningful contexts. Cross-curricular links enhanced the learning of children in Foundation Stage and students in the primary stage. Transition into Foundation Stage and to primary and beyond was managed well. The way in which the curriculum gave opportunities for independent learning, research, and critical thinking was exemplary, as was use of mobile technology. The curriculum was enriched by a wide range of in-class and out-of-class activities, including sports, music bands and orchestra. The curriculum also included activities related to the environment, local and wider heritage, community links, and Dubai's Expo 2020 bid. Staff modified the curriculum as necessary to ensure that the needs of different groups of students were met. The curriculum at Foundation Stage was structured well to meet the needs of the young learners there. Staff successfully offered support and challenging activities for students of all abilities, including those who were gifted or talented. Modifications helped students with special educational needs to make progress.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety arrangements were outstanding across Foundation Stage and primary stage. The very carefully maintained premises provided an attractive and stimulating environment, indoors and out, for students' safe and secure learning. Where potential risk was identified, policy and practice was adapted, and any necessary adjustment to facilities and equipment carried out. Students were well supervised at breaks. There were regular fire drills, with procedure adapted where necessary in the light of experience. The school's medical team contributed strongly to the curriculum, supporting students' understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. Students themselves contributed to their own health and wellbeing with high proportions taking advantage of the many clubs and activities that promoted healthy lifestyle. All staff were suitably trained in safeguarding and child protection.

The quality of the school's support was outstanding. The warm, respectful and supportive relationships between staff and students were the cornerstone of the school's ethos and success. Consistently high expectations, throughout the school, resulted in students' exemplary behaviour. Prompt and successful

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management procedures supported outstanding attendance and punctuality. The school's entrance procedures were inclusive, with excellent systems for early identification of students with special educational needs. Highly effective support programmes were implemented to maximise students' participation and potential in all areas of the curriculum and school life. Teachers planned lessons in which the curriculum was well modified and students given appropriate support. Consequently, almost all students with special educational needs made good and outstanding progress in lessons. Their attainment and progress was rigorously monitored. The school was well placed to extend the expertise of specialist staff to ensure that the needs of all groups of students are equally well met in Arabic lessons. The school's commitment to the uniqueness of every child, and its policy of "looking, listening and caring", underpinned the outstanding advice and support given to all students for their well-being and personal development.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of all aspects of leadership and management was outstanding. Aided by the Director, the Headteacher gave strong leadership to the school. She was ably supported by two Deputy Headteachers and an Assistant Headteacher. Together, the senior leaders successfully encouraged teamwork at all levels. Their communication of the vision and priorities for the school was clear. Overall, there was a strong sense of partnership among all staff, students and parents. Many staff had leadership responsibilities, with an appropriate focus on improving the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning. All heads of curriculum areas played a key and effective role, as did year-group leaders from Foundation Stage to Year 6. The school had a strong capacity for sustaining high standards and implementing further improvement.

Staff adopted a wide range of approaches to evaluating evidence on the quality of the school's work, including observing the quality of lessons. They analysed the results carefully, and planned and implemented effective action to address any shortcomings. Staff, students and parents were able to voice their opinions on school matters, and felt that leaders took account of their views. A notable approach was the 'have your say' sessions, in which small groups of students met senior leaders to discuss aspects of school life. The way in which staff helped each other and shared good teaching practice was a strength of the school.

Parents had a range of opportunities to be involved in the life and work of the school, including through the JESS Parents' Group. They were also involved in helping in assemblies, lessons and out-of-school-hours activities. Informal involvement was very good too, for example at the start and finish of the school day, and in social events. Parents were kept very well informed in a number of ways, including the website, portal and an instant communicator system. Reports to parents on their children's progress were helpful, and set out next steps in learning, particularly at the primary stage.

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The Governing Board showed well-judged leadership. Governors supported the school and exercised accountability through receiving regular reports on the school's progress. Support from the Board was ensuring a high quality learning campus. Funding for high quality resources was also helping to create a very positive learning environment.

The facilities were of high quality and were well maintained. Positive features included the foundation 1 Stage garden, funded by parents. The day-to-day life of the school, including arrangements for promoting and recording attendance, was very well organised. Some lessons in Islamic Education were not timetabled at fully suitable times. Health and safety aspects of the buildings and grounds were given good attention. The helpful administration team ensured that communication between all stakeholders was maintained at a high level.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school provide for Emirati students?

Emirati students were well supported and fully integrated in the school. They performed well in most key subjects and their progress was good to outstanding in these subjects. In lessons, they were active participants and collaborated well with their peers. They were involved in a majority of the before and after school activities. A range of excellent involvement and communication channels enabled parents to have accurate views on the achievements of their children. Detailed and frequent report cards were sent to parents. Emirati parents spoke highly of the school and felt that they were well involved in the community of the school. They were very pleased with the performance of their children.

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

The school was inclusive and gave outstanding support for students with special educational needs. It had very effective arrangements for early identification of needs. Specialists worked alongside staff and parents to ensure that students were accurately identified and effectively supported. The quality of leadership was outstanding, and students' attainment and progress were rigorously monitored. All identified students had an online profile which reflected the input of every adult associated with the child and ensured a very effective continuity of history and progression on transfer between year groups. Key target areas for each student's development were identified within this profile. All teachers had very good knowledge of these profiles and planned lessons in which the curriculum was effectively modified and students received an

appropriate level of support. Consequently, almost all students with special educational needs made good or outstanding progress in lessons. Parents were fully involved in their child's provision and well aware of the school's work.

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

Most of the teaching in Arabic as a first language was appropriate. The small number of students enabled teachers to provide an engaging learning environment. Most lessons were well planned, and included sufficient opportunities for students to read and write. Teachers had secure subject knowledge, and had the ability to motivate students to learn. Teaching strategies were suitable for most students, and resulted in improved language skills although these were more effective in developing receptive skills than productive skills, particularly in writing. Different and appropriate activities enabled students to acquire appropriate understanding of Arabic grammar. Rich resources were well used to enhance students' learning including ICT, for example in year 4 students used the interactive white board to answer grammar questions. The curriculum was broadly based on the Ministry of Education standards. However, students were not always challenged to speak and apply their language skills orally. It was reviewed and planned for appropriately, and in many, but not all, classes, it was enhanced appropriately to improve students reading and writing skills. The curriculum, as delivered in the classrooms, lacked regular, well-planned opportunities for students to develop their speaking and writing skills to high levels.

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	163	35%
	Last year	249	51%
Teachers	32		58%
Students	There were no senior students in the school		

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

Around one-third of parents responded to the questionnaire, a smaller proportion than in the previous year. Over half of the teachers responded, a similar proportion to the previous year. The parents who responded had very positive views about the school. All but one percent were satisfied with the overall quality of education in the school. High proportions thought that their children were making good progress in the core subjects, although the small number who could respond about Arabic as a first language were slightly less positive. Almost all had positive views about the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, and health and safety matters. Almost all parents, and all staff who responded, felt that the school was well led. Most parents and all staff thought that leaders listened to their views. Almost all teachers felt involved in curriculum review, school improvement tasks, and helpful professional development activities.

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

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