

INSPECTION REPORT

English Language Private School

Report published in April 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT English Language Private School

Location	Umm Hurair
Type of school	Private
Website	www.Dubai-els.com
Telephone	04-3377503
Address	Oud Mehta Road, Dubai P.O.Box 6680
Principal	Mazhar Qayyum
Curriculum	UK
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18, KG to Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	1519
Largest nationality group of Students	Pakistani
Number of Emirati students	3, less than 1%
Date of the inspection	17th to 20th March 2014

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The context of the school

The English Language Private School is located in the Umm Hurair district. Nearly all students were Pakistani expatriates.

The school offered the English National Curriculum which culminated in students taking IGCSE examinations usually at Year 11 and Advanced level examinations usually at age 18. Students also followed the Ministry of Education curricula for Arabic and Islamic Education.

The school organised students into four phases: The Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1 and 2, (primary), Key Stages 3 and 4 (secondary) and Key Stage 5 (post-16). Children were taught in mixed gender classes until Year 4 when boys and girls were taught separately.

The school's last full inspection was in the 2009-2010 academic year. The school's overall performance was then judged to be unsatisfactory. There then followed two DSIB guidance visits and five follow through inspections. After the last of these, DSIB determined that the school had made enough progress on the recommendations from the previous report to re-enter the normal DSIB inspection programme. This was the first of these full inspections.

The current Principal has been in post since December. Prior to that a temporary Principal was in place since the beginning of the current academic year.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- Students' good attainment and progress in secondary English;
- Students' good progress in science in the Foundation Stage and in post-16 phase;
- Students' good personal and social development across all phases.

Recommendations

- Improve students' progress in Arabic as an additional language particularly in the secondary phase by raising expectations of students and engagement by using broader teaching methods;
- Improve students' attainment and progress in mathematics, particularly in the Foundation Stage and in the primary phase by: making better use of Early Years Foundation Stage and English curriculum standards and strengthening transition arrangements;
- Increase the effectiveness of teaching by: training teachers to follow more precisely the English National standards when planning; training teachers to use a wider range of teaching strategies and systematically monitoring teaching quality and providing meaningful feedback;
- Improve the quality of assessment data particularly in primary and secondary phases; by more consistent collection and systematic analysis and using the results to guide lesson planning;
- Ensure that Governance improves the facilities and resources by: increasing laboratory provision, stocking the libraries adequately; and making up the shortfall in resources highlighted in this report.

Progress since the last inspection

The school had made steady progress since the last follow-through inspection. Corporal punishment and emotional abuse of students had stopped and staff/student relationships were now good. Leadership was better organised and distributed and it was making an impact on additional areas of school life. The curriculum and teaching strategies in the Foundation Stage had improved. These needed developing further in other parts of the school. There had been some improvement to teachers' lesson plans but this was inconsistent. The Foundation Stage facilities had recently improved.

Trend of overall performance



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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
English				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Not Applicable
Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Not Applicable
Mathematics				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science				
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Quality of students' learning skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Personal responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and Safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

Attainment was generally acceptable in most subjects and phases. It was unsatisfactory in secondary Arabic as an additional language, in Foundation Stage and primary phase mathematics, and good in secondary English. In Islamic Education, most students memorised the Holy Qur'an and had sound knowledge of key concepts in Islam. Older students could discuss the importance of Sunnah in Islam. Students' ability to link this knowledge to real life was limited. In Arabic as a first language, listening skills were secure for most primary students. They could understand standard Arabic and responded well to classroom instructions using an appropriate range of words and phrases. Independent and creative writing were the weakest skills. In Arabic as an additional language, most primary students listened attentively and responded correctly using basic vocabulary. However, secondary students' speaking skills were below expectations and were generally limited to a few words or basic sentences. Writing skills were unsatisfactory. In English vocabulary to describe events and recall stories was underdeveloped at the Foundation Stage and primary. Secondary students read varied texts with understanding and the majority had good creative writing skills. Attainment in mathematics was variable. Foundation Stage children and students in primary had limited understanding of the application of number and properties of shape. Secondary students had a reasonable understanding of percentages, ratio and algebra. The handling of data and making inferences from it were weaker areas. Post-16 students had a good understanding of statistics. Attainment in science was acceptable in all phases. Students acquired scientific knowledge to an acceptable level, but did not test predictions, conduct investigations, or suggest explanations.

Progress was similar to attainment however in the Foundation Stage and post-16 phase science progress were good. In Islamic Education, most primary students made acceptable progress in recalling what they had learned. Older students made acceptable progress in their knowledge of Seerah. Students made least progress in Qur'an recitation. In Arabic as a first language, most students in primary made acceptable progress in listening and speaking skills. Progress in independent reading and creative writing was slow. In Arabic as an additional language, students made steady progress in listening and basic reading skills. Students' speaking was developing slowly while progress in developing writing independent writing was very limited. Children in the lower phases made acceptable progress in English using speaking and listening skills in varied contexts. In secondary, students made rapid progress in speaking with fluency and intonation. In mathematics, Foundation Stage children made unsatisfactory progress in using number concepts in unfamiliar contexts. Secondary students made good progress in using problem-solving strategies. In science, Foundation Stage children made good progress in making predictions. Post-16 students made good progress in applying statistical tests to the data collected.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Learning skills were acceptable in all phases though in the Foundation Stage and post-16 phase, the improvement in learning skills was more evident than in other phases. Students were keen to learn and interacted well with each other. Most students were conscientious and were prepared to work hard. When given the opportunity as in Foundation Stage, they wanted to take responsibility for their learning. Throughout the school, students were anxious to do well and wanted to know how they could improve. A minority of students were over-reliant on teachers for information and simply followed instructions rather than thinking for themselves. This aspect of critical thinking had not been sufficiently embedded as a learning strategy. In some English lessons, students showed confidence in their own ideas and promoted them well in class discussion. The mutual support amongst students was an emerging strength. Where students did work together, they made connections with their prior learning and related their knowledge to real world contexts.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' personal and social development was good in all phases. Students shared a keen sense of responsibility and developed positive relationships with each other and with staff. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoyed school, trusted their teachers and wanted to please. Students had good standards of behaviour in lessons and during recreation periods. They were motivated learners and took pride in their school. They had a good understanding of healthy eating. Their attendance was acceptable.

Students had a good understanding of Islamic values and the importance of Islam in modern Dubai society. They had a clear appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai. Students had a positive attitude towards the UAE's heritage and traditions. They were very aware of and respected their own culture but their deeper understanding of cultures and traditions in the wider world was limited.

Students' civic responsibility was good: they felt part of a 'family' at school. Students were becoming more involved in school decision-making partly because of the growing influence of the school council, the house and prefect systems. Students were engaged in activities to care for the school environment by organising campaigns reducing litter and introducing more effective water-coolers. Students had a strong work ethic and put this to good use when organising a 'Fun Fair' to raise funds for a cancer patient. Students were aware of the need for energy conservation and took individual responsibility for ensuring that lights and air conditioning were closed down.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

The quality of teaching for effective learning was acceptable in the Foundation Stage, to secondary phase and good in post-16 phase. Teachers knew their subjects well but in mathematics in Foundation and primary phases, some incorrect concepts were taught. Most teaching was instructional and knowledge based. This resulted in the reasonable transmission of facts but a lack of opportunity for independent enquiry and the development of critical thinking. The exception to this was in post-16 lessons. Teachers occasionally monitored the progress of students during lessons and provided support when needed. Lesson objectives were displayed but rarely reviewed at the end of lessons to check for understanding. Limited resources and the lack of opportunity for practical experimentation hindered progress. Teachers' questioning skills were variable. Teachers frequently asked students to recall only factual knowledge and allowed insufficient time for students to think. Occasionally, there was more dialogue and discussion when questions were open - ended and challenging. Teachers were making greater use of interactive whiteboards and data projectors to introduce lessons in an interesting way. Teachers had positive relationships with students.

The quality of assessment was acceptable in the post-16 phase and Foundation Stage because teachers monitored progress over time and supported students appropriately. In primary and secondary phases, the quality of assessment was unsatisfactory because assessment processes were not used consistently across subjects. The recorded assessment information from summative tests lacked analysis, and was not used to inform planning. Teachers had an acceptable knowledge of their students' strengths and weaknesses but they did not always use this knowledge to ensure an appropriate match of work to the full range of ability. Teachers regularly checked students' understanding through marking work and asking factual questions, but too often the written comments did not indicate how to individual students could improve or reach the next steps in their learning. Self and peer assessment opportunities for students were infrequent.

[View judgements](#)

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

The quality of the curriculum was acceptable in all phases. A committee had been established to review and to develop a broad and balanced curriculum. The school's intention was to respond proactively to this and previous inspection reports to promote a curriculum of challenge, enjoyment, relevance and coherence for all its students. The work to date had provided a conceptual framework for curriculum development and a planning model for review and progression. The school was in its early stages of development and implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage and English National Curricula. There was an awareness of the gaps in both the current school curricula's content and skills' development. The transition arrangements and systems for recording progress in a common format were priorities for school leaders. A

range of extra-curricular activities and other options in the post-16 phase was being developed in line with the school's action plan. These options provided students with greater opportunities to extend their learning and interests.

The quality of curriculum design was acceptable. The school had started to modify its curriculum to meet the different needs of students with special educational needs (SEN). The curriculum modifications within classes were inconsistent and successful modification depended on individual teachers' understanding. Gifted and talented students were not provided with more challenging work in most lessons. The curricular options in secondary and the post-16 phase had recently been extended offering older students a broader range of subjects. This increase in choice catered for students' talents and interests as well as offering a wider range of career opportunities.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

The provision for students' health and safety was acceptable. A wide range of policies and procedures had been implemented to ensure that all students were kept safe. Students were supervised throughout the day and transport arrangements were monitored. The school building and resources were in reasonable condition and catered adequately for students' educational needs. Health and safety records were up to date and additional fire drills had been prioritised. Students had access to very supportive medical staff. Medicines were carefully managed and stored securely. Healthy living was promoted through class work and students were encouraged to opt for healthy lunches. Child protection arrangements were in place and training for teachers was in the process of being completed.

The school had appropriate procedures for the identification of students with special educational needs (SEN) but the quality of support for these students was inconsistent across phases and within some classes. Consequently some students made slower progress than others but their progress overall was acceptable. A growing number of students had had their individual needs identified and had individual education plans written to guide class teachers. There was also weekly withdrawal support for some students. Staff-student relationships were positive and respectful. Most staff managed behaviour effectively although where teachers lacked good behaviour management skills some classes, particularly in primary, were noisy. There were clear processes and procedures for managing attendance and punctuality. The school had planned improvements for the promotion of good attendance. Students' well-being and personal development were monitored. Careers guidance was broad and appropriate.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The Principal had built on the work of his immediate predecessor by accelerating improvement and instigating a range of management systems. He had formed an effective leadership team and had shared his vision for the school with all the stakeholders in innovative ways. He was visible about the school and had quickly set about redefining its culture. Senior leaders undertook their delegated responsibilities diligently. Relationships amongst the staff were largely positive. All wanted the school to improve. School expectations were being communicated more clearly. Senior students had a voice in the school and played their part in shaping its development. The recent changes in provision and outcomes indicated that the school had the capacity to maintain improvement.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Although recent self-evaluation processes were hurried and not broadly based, the school had a reasonable idea of its strengths and weaknesses and had made a development plan to guide its improvement. This plan had appropriate developmental priorities and realistic timescales. However, there was a lack of success criteria to enable the school to monitor its progress. Students' progress was checked using a variety of methods but these lacked accuracy and did not yield sufficient usable information. The school had begun to monitor teaching quality to provide a broad picture of strengths and weaknesses. However, the gathering and analysis of information was not systematic. Over time, the school had made steady progress on most of the last DSIB Inspection report's recommendations.

The partnership with parents and the community was acceptable. Parents were concerned over two changes of Principal in a short time and confirmed the previous lack of direct contact with the school. Parents had noted recent improvements to communications and engagement with them. The Parents' Council was recently formed and had already had a series of meetings with the new Principal who had listened to their concerns and acted on them. Parents received regular reports on their children's work and met regularly with staff to discuss their progress. The school had begun to set up more contacts with the local community.

The quality of governance was acceptable. Over time, governance had helped the school improve steadily and had made important strategic decisions. The current board was newly constituted but had first-hand knowledge of the school and was anxious for its improvement. Members were drawn from a range of stakeholders and had useful experience. They appreciated what the current Principal had achieved in a short time and supported him. They had planned a series of meetings with standing agenda items related to school improvement. They were not yet systematically holding the school to account.

Aspects of management were unsatisfactory. Most teaching vacancies had been filled but a minority of teachers lacked a suitable teaching qualification. Staff training was being introduced but there remained weaknesses in teaching quality. The Foundation Stage had been refurbished and restocked but the rest of

the school needed the same attention to be paid to; refurbishing classrooms and furniture on a rolling programme; improving science facilities, library and digital technology provision; increased stock of sequential reading books, practical mathematics equipment and materials for students with special educational needs.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school was inclusive and demonstrated a clear vision for students with special educational needs. However, the identification of such students was not in place in secondary and the post-16 phase. In September 2014 screening for students with special educational needs was planned from the point of entry to school. Individual learning plans with specific targets were in place for all currently identified students with special educational needs. Parents were kept well informed and provided with the support necessary to help their child at home. A number of parents had been resistant to obtaining external assessment for their child but this was a reducing feature. A lack of effective curriculum modification had prevented a minority of students from making acceptable progress. Provision for the Gifted and talented was not yet in place.

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

Teachers of Arabic as a first language had adequate subject knowledge. They planned for their lessons and displayed and communicated their lesson objectives to the students. They used the resources available to an adequate level in order to enhance learning. However, teachers' expectations were consistently low. Although the school provided internal training in teaching skills, this had limited impact on improving the quality of teaching in this subject. Teachers used a limited range of teaching strategies which did not help all students, with their varying needs, to benefit from it and progress in the language. Lessons were heavily dominated by teacher talk and presentation and most learning relied on passive listening. Teachers rarely provided opportunity of independent or collaborative learning. The curriculum was based on the Ministry of Education standards and textbooks and fulfilled the statutory requirements. The school's curriculum was regularly reviewed and curriculum maps were updated annually although this process did not always result in significant improvement. The curriculum reviews had not led to the establishment of clear benchmarks for assessing students' language skills.

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	99	13%
	Last year	0	0%
Teachers	5		1%
Students	93		35%

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

The surveys produced a limited level of response from parents, staff and students but provided broad indicators of opinion. Parents were satisfied with the quality of education. They felt their children enjoyed school and made good progress in the core subjects. Parents valued the school's safe environment and bus safety. They were concerned about the frequent changes of Principal and limited subject choices at the post-16 phase. Parents and students thought that bullying was dealt with effectively. Students were satisfied with the education provided and valued the progress they were making in the core subjects. Most students recognised that homework promoted their learning. A significant minority was dissatisfied with the range of subject options and the limited provision for extracurricular activities. While the response rate from teachers was too low to provide meaningful information, all who responded to their survey were positive about the operations of the school.

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:

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