

Jumeirah English Speaking School Inspection Report

Kindergarten to Year 6

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 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 (Muslim students only), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Jumeirah, Jumeirah English Speaking School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from KG to Year 6, aged from three to 11 years. The school follows the English National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 703 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires. Overwhelmingly, the parents were very happy with the school, almost all parents agreeing 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 almost all agreed that they were comfortable approaching the school with any questions or complaints and felt 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, but about one fifth of parents were unsure about the school's response to the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Parents were very happy with their children's progress in all subjects except for Islamic Education, where many parents were unsure of progress and Arabic, where a significant proportion of parents felt that attainment and progress were not good.

How well does the school perform overall?

Jumeirah English Speaking School, Jumeirah, was a good school with many outstanding features. Inspectors judged the attainment and progress in the all the key subjects, except for Islamic Education and Arabic to be outstanding. Many children were able to read and were beginning to write by the end of the Foundation Stage, and by the end of their primary education, the students' attainment in the English National Curriculum tests was well above average with almost all reaching the expected level and well over half reaching the level expected of 14 year olds. The attitudes and behaviour from the youngest children to the older students were outstanding. The students were courteous, charming and polite and their attitude to learning was exemplary with a quiet sense of calm and purpose permeating the whole school. Students had an awareness of their responsibilities as citizens and they showed an understanding of and a respect for Islam. The older students' economic and environmental understanding was outstanding and the younger children were able to talk about caring for the place where they live, and how the new Dubai Metro would help the environment.

The teaching was of a very high standard, with at least two out of every three lessons being judged as good or outstanding. Teachers were dedicated and skilful, with a strong commitment to the student's success and an approach to discipline and control that was so calm and measured that a raised voice was seldom heard throughout the school day. The students had excellent learning skills, they were neat and meticulous in their written work and orally they spoke with insight and intelligence, using a wide ranging vocabulary with confidence and pride. Procedures for assessing the students' work were mostly good, and in some cases outstanding. In many areas teachers' marking of students' work was of high quality with excellent feedback. The school was beginning to analyse data in an increasingly sophisticated way in order to identify trends and modify the provision accordingly. The curriculum was of high quality, with, in the Foundation Stage, a range of integrated learning activities and a free-flow approach enabling the children to deepen their learning and their understanding and promote their maturity and personal development. The arrangements for the health and safety of the students were outstanding. All staff took their duty of care very seriously and health and safety policies and procedures were followed with accuracy and precision. The buildings and facilities were safe, secure and well-maintained. Healthy lifestyles were promoted, and child protection procedures were well-established and implemented with sensitivity.

The quality of leadership and management of the school was outstanding. The Principal and her senior colleagues had both vision and a strong personal commitment to the health, welfare and success of the children. The senior leadership team, had successfully organised the management structure so that distributed responsibilities had been well-developed at year group and classroom level. Some progress had been made in addressing the recommendations from the previous report, but further work was necessary to improve the standards and quality in Islamic Education and in Arabic.

Key features of the school

- The strong and effective leadership at all levels, successfully promoted and maintained a powerful school ethos of community and high achievement;
- The outstanding behaviour, attitude and maturity of the students of all ages led to a harmonious and productive learning community;
- Teachers' expert knowledge of learning in the Foundation Stage resulted in exemplary collective planning and teamwork and, as a consequence, excellent learning and progress;
- The outstanding level of care ensured that students' well-being and personal development were a high priority for all staff;
- The outstanding quality, the professionalism and strong personal commitment of all the staff and governors which contributed to continuous school improvement;
- There were weaknesses in the curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic;
- The quality of feedback and assessment was outstanding in English throughout the school but in Arabic, the assessment arrangements were poor with imprecise criteria for measuring students' progress in their reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Recommendations

- Improve the arrangements for providing Islamic Education and Arabic so that:-
 - They meet the statutory curriculum requirements for time allocation;
 - The quality of teaching and learning is improved to promote coherence and clear progression;
 - Standards of attainment and progress are raised to the high levels of the other key subjects.
- Improve the analysis and tracking of students' progress so that all teachers plan and execute appropriate activities to match the learning needs of all students.

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

Although more than five per cent of the student population in the school were Muslim, only a few students attended the arranged Islamic Education classes which were organised to run outside the normal school hours. For those few Arab and non-Arab students who attended, attainment and progress were both acceptable. Almost all of them were making sufficient progress with their Qur'an recital skills and were developing their understanding of Islamic values, their knowledge of the Pillars of Islam and were beginning to develop their understanding of the behaviour expected of a good Muslim.

The attainment and progress for students of Arabic as an additional language were both unsatisfactory. Although most students in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in listening and speaking and acceptable progress in reading and writing, levels of attainment for the majority of older students were unsatisfactory. After Year 3 most students made very limited progress with their listening and speaking skills and almost no progress with their reading and writing skills. By Year 6, most students were unable to demonstrate the ability to communicate in Arabic to an acceptable level and both their oral and their written production of the language were poor. Only a few of the Arab nationals, for whom Arabic as a first language is a statutory requirement, attended the arranged classes which were outside the normal school hours. The level of attainment and progress for most of those students who attended was acceptable.

Both attainment and progress in English were outstanding throughout the school. By the end of Foundation Stage many children could read and write letters with a degree of accuracy. By the end of the primary phase students were achieving levels in the English National Curriculum tests which were well above average. Students listened precisely and talked fluently using a wide-ranging vocabulary and technical language accurately. Well before the end of the Primary phase almost all children were writing with well-formed cursive handwriting. They used figures of speech appropriately and could describe the books they had read, identifying genres and justifying their own point of view.

Attainment in mathematics was outstanding. Students consistently attained standards well above age-related norms. Progress throughout both Foundation and primary phases was outstanding. Mathematical skills and understanding were being developed very well throughout the school. In the Foundation Stage, children confidently displayed high levels of understanding and application of numeracy and shape. This was seen to good effect during free-flow activities. In the primary phase students were successfully using specialist mathematical language and could work confidently with square and cubic numbers, regular polygons and discuss and make use of inverse operations. Students were able to confidently use skills and competence in mathematics in other subjects and topic areas.

Attainment in science was consistently outstanding and it had been improving in recent years. By the end of the primary phase, students attained well-above average in National Curriculum tests. In Foundation Stage, children made excellent progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through discovery and exploration. However, in the primary phase progress was not consistent for all groups of students. By the end of primary phase, most students knew a range of scientific facts and vocabulary, and understood various processes and principles. Almost all students understood the concept of a fair test and could carry out practical investigations. As a result, they deepened their understanding of science in the real world and fostered a love of science.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding. Even the youngest children were mature beyond their years. Positive relationships prevailed throughout the school. Students exercised self-discipline and could work independently or in collaboration with others. They knew that they could ask an adult for help if needed. Attendance was good and students invariably arrived on time for lessons.

Students had a clear understanding of ways in which they might contribute to the future of Dubai by becoming teachers, doctors and joining conservation groups. Younger students had an acceptable understanding and appreciation of Islam. Older students had a good understanding of feasts and activities such as clothing requirements and prayer and fasting at Ramadan. Muslim students provided adequate detail of the Pillars of Islam and had a developing awareness of the behaviour expected of them. All students had an excellent understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai and were aware of how this enhanced their experiences. A small number of students knew about traditional homes, souks and foods and could relate this to the history of Dubai.

Students had an excellent understanding of how Dubai had developed from Bedouin to modern times and the impact this had on lifestyles. They were also aware of the global financial crisis and its possible impact on Dubai and their families. Their awareness of local and global issues, such as water and energy conservation and pollution, was excellent and they cared for the environment by recycling and conserving energy. Even younger students knew that the new metro system could help to reduce traffic and pollution.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was, for the most part, outstanding. In Foundation Stage it was of consistently high quality. Teachers' expert knowledge of learning resulted in exemplary collective planning and teamwork and, as a consequence, excellent learning and progress. In the primary years the best teaching was mostly seen towards the beginning and end of this phase. However, teaching was, mostly, at least good and it was frequently outstanding. In those lessons which were less than outstanding, teachers were not always modifying the work to meet the needs of all learners. In almost all cases, teachers' effective use of resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards, helped to promote outstanding progress.

The quality of students' learning was usually outstanding throughout the school. Students were strongly motivated and positively engaged in their work. They clearly enjoyed their time at school and a degree of independence. The capacity to make discerning choices about their learning was evident even amongst the youngest children. The free-flow activities in Kindergarten provided excellent opportunities for the development of these key learning skills and many cases of exemplary practice were seen. Throughout the school a quiet sense of purpose, application and concentration permeated the atmosphere, and the calm environment meant that teachers barely had to raise their voices to call a class to attention. The students collaborated effectively and, towards the end of the primary stage, they were beginning to develop critical thinking and enquiry skills. They used resource areas, such as the library, with maturity and purpose. In the main, students could apply their learning to the real world and in unfamiliar situations, though this was not fully developed at the primary phase in mathematics and in science.

For the most part the assessment strategies were exemplary and they formed an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The quality of feedback and assessment was outstanding in English throughout the school. In most other subjects it was usually at least good, but the quality of marking and feedback to students did not always highlight what the students needed to do in order to improve their work. In Arabic, the assessment was poor with imprecise criteria for measuring students' progress in their reading, writing, speaking and listening.

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

The curriculum was based on the English National Curriculum and offered breadth, balance and challenge. This was helpful in supporting teachers' planning. There was a strong awareness of global and environmental issues. The curriculum for science enabled most students to attain high standards in knowledge and understanding. It had recently been reviewed to ensure that, by placing greater emphasis on the development of investigative skills, students' learning and progress would be further enhanced. Recent focused work on literacy was having an impact on raising standards and meeting students' needs. The development of the contextual element of the curriculum, involving more thematic, cross-curricular topic work based on local cultural, economic and environmental understanding represented an ambitious model in cross-curricular integration, but it was at an early stage of development. There were weaknesses in the curriculum for Islamic Education and Arabic and the school was not fulfilling its responsibilities for those students for whom Islamic Education was a statutory requirement, since this subject was run out of normal school hours. The time allocation for Arabic as an additional language was below Ministry of Education requirements and the school did not offer a sufficiently challenging programme; nor was the curriculum meeting the needs of first language Arabic speakers, since these classes, too, were held at the end of the school day, out of normal classroom hours. A review of the curriculum was taking place on an annual basis and staff were systematically moving towards an original, skills based, topic driven curriculum in line with the

long-term vision of the school. An extensive and well-attended extra-curricular programme was available including sporting and cultural activities.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for protecting students were outstanding. All staff took their duty of care very seriously; they knew and adhered to the policies for health and safety. Arrivals and departures were well-co-ordinated and supervised by conscientious security guards who patrolled the site throughout the day. Buildings and facilities, including transport and the swimming pools, were safe, secure and suitably maintained. Teaching areas were spacious, clean and well-ventilated. Procedures for emergencies, such as fire drills, were well established. Equipment was checked and staff were trained to use it safely. Regular health and safety checks and risk assessments ensured accidents were kept to the minimum and were generally minor. Healthy lifestyles were promoted through the curriculum and after-school activities with additional support and guidance from the school nurse who was proactive in working with students and families. Child-protection procedures were good.

The quality of support for students was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good with many outstanding features in the primary phase. Staff provided excellent role-models and relationships were positive. Students respected and cared for each other and the school's positive approach, together with students' own maturity, ensured behaviour was outstanding. There were well-developed systems for data-analysis and feedback but the impact across all subjects was inconsistent. However, guidance and support for students with additional learning needs was effective. Attendance was well monitored. Students reported that they felt safe in school and that teachers provided outstanding support. There were effective and well-managed care arrangements across the school reinforced by the strong links with parents.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management was outstanding throughout the school. The school's founding vision and its mission statement of Achieving Excellence Together permeated the school at all levels. The strength and personal qualities of the senior leaders and the distributed leadership and management structure was successful in maintaining and nurturing successful teams of caring professionals. Arrangements for performance management and continuous professional development were well-developed and ensured that the personal and career needs of all staff were met and were aligned with the aims of the school. The Principal and her senior team were strongly committed to the students' success and were perceptive in identifying issues and planning effective interventions.

Well-developed systems for self-evaluation existed, and good use was made of data analysis in order to inform planning and identify priorities. Significant progress had been made in addressing the recommendations of the previous inspection report, and the quality of the provision and student outcomes in Arabic in the early primary years were much improved as a consequence. However, further steps were necessary in order to comply with the Ministry of Education requirements for Islamic Education and Arabic.

The school's partnerships with parents were outstanding. The open door policy adopted by the Principal and all her colleagues meant that parents were able at any time to consult with class teachers or senior leaders about any matters of concern. Attendance at parent consultation events was extremely high and the involvement of parents as full partners in learning meant that their children's learning and welfare were well supported. Good links existed within the locality; the local community provided an excellent resource for learning which enhanced the curriculum and rooted the school in the Jumeirah neighbourhood.

The school governors met monthly and maintained a close monitoring and advisory role. Their support for the school was outstanding, both as loyal and dedicated advisers and mentors and as critical friends. The school was fully accountable to the governing body for its actions, its successes and the areas for development.

The quantity, range and quality of the staffing, facilities and resources for learning were outstanding. Apart from in the key subjects of Islamic Education and Arabic language, there were sufficient well-qualified staff to maintain class sizes at a reasonable level and the quality of learning was enhanced further through the benefit of many teaching assistants. Classrooms were of ample size, and suited together in order to be able to share substantial resource areas. The library was excellent as were the facilities for enhancing teaching and learning with information and communication technology (ICT). The school benefited from a swimming pool on-site and many outdoor, shaded play areas.

Summary of inspection judgements

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

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

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

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

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in English? | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| Age group: | Foundation Stage | Primary |
| Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Progress over time | Outstanding | Outstanding |

| How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics? | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| Age group: | Foundation Stage | Primary |
| Attainment | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Progress over time | Outstanding | Outstanding |

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

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

| How good are teaching and learning? | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Age group: | Foundation Stage | Primary |
| Teaching for effective learning | Outstanding | Good |
| Quality of students' learning | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Assessment | Outstanding | Good |

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

| How well does the school protect and support students? | | |
|--|------------------|-------------|
| Age group: | Foundation Stage | Primary |
| Health and safety | Outstanding | Outstanding |
| Quality of support | Outstanding | Good |

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

| 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.

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