

Al Shorouq Private School Inspection Report

Kindergarten to Cycle 3

Report published May 2011

Contents

Explanation of the inspection levels used in the report.....	3
Basic information about the school.....	3
How well does the school perform overall?	4
Key features of the school.....	4
Recommendations.....	5
How good are the students' attainment and progress in key subjects?.....	5
How good is the students' personal and social development?	6
How good are the teaching and learning?.....	7
How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?.....	7
How well does the school protect and support students?.....	8
How good are the leadership and management of the school?	8
Summary of inspection judgements.....	10
Next steps	14
How to contact us.....	14

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.

Al Shorouq Private School was inspected in January 2011 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 Jumeirah, Al Shorouq Private School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to Cycle 3, aged three to 17 years. The school follows a Ministry of Education curriculum. At the time of the inspection there were 2007 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires sent to parents. Parents were very positive about almost all aspects of the school and its leadership. They thought that teaching, learning and support for children with special educational needs were good. Almost all thought that their children were making good progress in Islamic Education, Arabic, English, mathematics and science. Most thought their children were well supported in their future education and career choices. Most thought that parent meetings were helpful. They found the school effective and timely in their communications with parents and responsive in addressing their concerns. Most thought that the school had responded well to the recommendations of the last report. A minority wanted more information on their children's progress to help support them in their learning. A minority also thought that parents were insufficiently involved in the life of the school.

How well does the school perform overall?

The school provided an acceptable quality of education. The Vice-Principal had taking a strong and effective lead in working with his staff to improve the quality of education for students. Wide ranging initiatives, recently introduced, had resulted in some significant improvements. Others were at an early stage of development. The school had addressed the health and safety issues identified in the last report. It had made good progress in meeting the other recommendations. The school showed a good capacity for further improvement.

There were improvements in many areas of students' attainment and progress. These were not yet consistent within or across subjects or phases of the school. Students' attitudes and behaviour and their Islamic, cultural and civic understanding were good. Issue of students' behaviour in Cycle 2 had been addressed. Students' economic and environmental understanding had improved significantly. This reflected the increased focus within subjects and the involvement of students in more direct initiatives aimed at improving the environment. Teaching and learning had improved and were now good overall in both the Kindergarten and in Cycle 3. Despite improvements in Cycles 2 and 3 they remained acceptable. A recent professional development programme was impacting positively on teaching. Assessment was good in Kindergarten and remained acceptable across all other phases. It was not being used sufficiently well to target support to students or to help them understand how to improve. The curriculum was now good in the Kindergarten and in Cycle 2. Students were benefiting from more choice and practical learning activities. It remained acceptable in Cycles 1 and 3 where limited progress had been made. Health and safety and the quality of support were good in the Kindergarten and acceptable at the other phases. Security had been improved; hazardous practices on the school buses had been resolved and the movement of children and cars outside the school were now more effectively controlled. Health was being promoted well through the curriculum and other initiatives but was being hindered by the unhealthy choices offered in the school canteen. Leadership and self-evaluation and improvement planning were developing but remained acceptable. The lack of robust external verification of the school's attainment was a barrier to the effective assessment of students' progress. Partnership with parents and the local community, governance, and staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable.

Key features of the school

- The safe, caring environment and the positive relationships between teachers, parents and students;
- The drive for improvement shown by the Vice-Principal and the commitment of staff to developing their school;
- The significant improvements made in meeting the recommendations of the last report;
- The positive impact of new initiatives and staff appointments in supporting students with special educational needs, professional development of teachers and the enrichment of aspects of the curriculum.

Recommendations

- Develop teaching to promote independent learning across all subjects and to ensure activities which fully challenge and meet the needs of all students;
- Improve teachers' classroom management and corridor discipline in some classes in Cycles 1 and 2, to improve learning and to ensure appropriate supervision at the end of the school day;
- Further develop the use of assessment to inform teaching and support students in identifying how they might improve;
- Enrich the curriculum in Cycles 1 and 3 to provide a broader learning experience including an arts option for students in Cycle 3;
- Make use of international comparators to measure more effectively the standards of attainment of students and to provide a basis against which future improvements can be measured.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were good in the Kindergarten and in Cycles 1 and 2. Attainment was good in Cycle 3 but progress was only acceptable. Students' understanding of Islamic values was very strong. In all phases, their memorisation was good and was above that expected for their age. In the Kindergarten they knew that Allah is Creator. At Cycle 2, students' knowledge of prayers and the pillars of Islam were well developed. By Cycle 3, most students knew their duties as Muslims and how to apply them in their lives. A few students could not apply recitation skills correctly in reading The Holy Qur'an.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language were good in the Kindergarten and in Cycle 1. Both were acceptable in Cycles 2 and 3. Kindergarten children wrote letters of the alphabet and a few words particularly well. Cycle 1 students' comprehension of stories and poems and their paragraph writing were particularly good. A majority of Cycle 2 students had made good progress in speaking and listening. Their independent reading and writing skills were less developed, particularly among boys in Grades 8 and 9. In Cycle 3, attainment in listening was good for most students but boys' abilities to speak at length were significantly weaker than girls. Boys' independent reading and writing skills were also less well developed.

Attainment and progress in English were good in the Kindergarten and Cycle 1. Attainment was acceptable and progress good in Cycles 2 and 3, where most students attained levels in line with international standards. In the Kindergarten, listening skills were particularly well developed. By Cycle 3 students contributed fluently to class discussions. Students' speaking and reading for information skills were consistently strong. By Cycle 3, students were confident in their extended reading and were developing appropriate research skills. Across all phases, students' use of grammar was less well developed in their writing. They had begun to write for different purposes and were now able to write at length.

Attainment and progress in mathematics in the Kindergarten and Cycle 1 were acceptable. They were both good in Cycles 2 and 3. At Kindergarten and Cycle 1, most students performed number operations well. By Cycles 2 and 3, the progress of a majority of students was above international standards. Most children in Kindergarten were making acceptable progress in counting and sorting. In Cycle 1, students had progressed well in using fractions and simple algebraic operations. Almost all students in Cycles 2 and 3 carried out complex calculations well in relation to properties of geometric shapes. Students at all stages were making good progress in their reasoning and problem-solving skills.

Attainment in science was acceptable across all phases. Progress was acceptable in the Kindergarten and in Cycles 1 and 2. It was good in Cycle 3. Students at all levels exhibited good knowledge and understanding of key concepts, theories and ideas in science. Kindergarten children identified different seeds accurately. Cycle 1 students understood the food chain and Cycle 2 students knew the characteristics of amphibians. Cycle 3 students studying chemistry, biology and physics were able to apply acceptable reasoning, observation and investigation skills but lacked sufficient grounding in scientific method or the ability to carry out in-depth and rigorous research.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were good. Almost all students were polite. They had a strong rapport and mutual respect with their teachers. Students enjoyed their classes and most were highly attentive and eager to learn. They supported each other well in group work. Students knew about the importance of a good diet and exercise and made healthy choices. Attendance and punctuality were good.

Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good across all phases. Students carried out roles and responsibilities well including being members of the student parliament and student forum. Most students demonstrated a strong understanding of Islamic values. They respected the culture of the UAE. Students were able to list and discuss many of the local traditions and features of modern Dubai including its food, holidays and celebrations. Most talked confidently about the different aspects of Dubai's diversity including the languages and cultural roots of its population.

Economic and environmental understanding was good across all levels. Students knew about Dubai's economic position in the UAE and the world and were able to describe the development of modern day Dubai from its origins. Students talked about their career choices and understood how these choices would have a positive impact on Dubai's future. All students had a strong environmental awareness. They talked about their involvement in environmental activities and knew about conservation. They understood the need to protect local, national and world resources.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good in the Kindergarten and in Cycle 3. It was acceptable in Cycles 1 and 2. Most teachers planned lessons well and ensured a good pace of learning. They had positive relationships with students. Most had good subject and teaching knowledge. Most teachers used questioning well and shared clearly learning objectives and outcomes with students. Most teachers were creative in using resources, including the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to illustrate what was being taught. In a few classes teaching was outstanding. These teachers had high levels of subject knowledge. They planned stimulating learning activities to meet the varying needs of students, including those with special educational needs. A minority of teaching, particularly in Cycles 1 and 2 was over directed. This limited students' opportunities to participate fully or make choices in their learning. In a few lessons, weak teaching significantly restricted students' rates of progress. The good quality of teaching in the Kindergarten was most evident when teachers worked with a classroom assistant. In Cycle 3, teachers were providing students with increased opportunities to develop their extended writing and independent learning.

The quality of students' learning was good in the Kindergarten and in Cycle 3. It was acceptable in Cycles 1 and 2. Most students were eager to learn. They responded well in lessons when given the opportunity to lead learning, share what they knew or discuss their ideas. Most responded very well in group discussions. Students' learning was less effective when they had insufficient time to think about what they had learned. They had insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. Kindergarten children responded very well to the increased opportunities to learn through practical activities. Older students worked particularly well in lessons through acting as learning partners or in groups where they challenged and supported each other. By Cycle 3, they were responding very positively to newly introduced initiatives aimed at supporting their enquiry and research skills.

Assessment was good in Kindergarten and remained acceptable across all other phases. Teachers monitored how students were completing their coursework well. They were developing their skills in measuring the knowledge, skills and understanding of individual students as a result of an increased focus on tracking students' attainment. Leaders had worked hard with teachers to create a whole school approach to assessment. This had led to greater consistency in using assessment information to target more effectively support to learners. Written feedback to students was inconsistent and often just congratulatory rather than providing sufficient guidance on how to improve.

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

The curriculum was good in the Kindergarten and in Cycle 2. It was acceptable in Cycles 1 and 3. From Grades 1 to 12, the school followed the Ministry of Education curriculum. It was regularly reviewed and had been enhanced through the introduction of many new initiatives. The Kindergarten curriculum provided a well planned framework for building children's skills in communication and language, early numeracy and their knowledge and understanding of the

world. Their experiences were enriched by a good range of physical and creative development opportunities. Cycle 1 students benefited from an appropriate range of learning experiences including art, Physical Education and music in addition to a few field trips and one weekly activity session. In Cycle 2, a much broader range of activities was provided for students every Tuesday. These were well planned, well resourced and provided good creative, community service, sports and academic development opportunities. Cycle 3 students enjoyed a good range of activities including weekly sessions for research and health education. Grades 11 and 12 students did not have the opportunity to study an arts strand but had to follow a science-based curriculum. The morning form time across all phases provided good opportunities for students' personal and social development. Students' use of ICT was not integrated across all subjects and cross-curricular links were not systematically planned. Students' experiences of the wider community and environment, and the provision of remedial and support classes for students with specific educational needs had improved significantly.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety and the quality of support were good in the Kindergarten and acceptable at the other phases. There had been significant improvements since the last inspection. This included safer traffic arrangements at the end of the day. School entrances were rigorously monitored and visitors signed in on arrival. Premises were maintained to a high standard and fire drills and other safety procedures were carried out regularly. Overcrowding in some Cycle 1 and 2 classes were a possible hazard to evacuation procedures. Students were not always well supervised in Cycle 1 between lessons or in Cycles 1 and 2 at dismissal times. Healthy living was promoted well; however, unhealthy food was sold in the school canteen. Medical staff regularly monitored students and informed teachers of health issues that might affect individual students' learning. Displays about healthy lifestyles were evident throughout the school. Advice had been given on healthy living through workshops to parents and students. Sports activities enhanced students' opportunities to become fit. Staff were aware of procedures outlined in the recently introduced child protection policy.

The quality of support was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable across the rest of the school. Attendance was monitored and parents were contacted about absences. The school provided appropriate careers advice for older students. Support for students with special educational needs had been introduced recently. Individual education plans were in place and a register of students' needs was maintained. Tracking of students' academic progress was acceptable but insufficient use was made of the information to ensure improvement for all students.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership had some strengths; it remained acceptable overall. The Vice-Principal's strong management skills had driving forward school improvements. The Principal had played a more passive but supportive role. Middle managers and other staff's leadership skills were at

different stages of development. There was room for more formal devolved leadership to develop the skills of staff and to help measure the impact of the many school initiatives. Managers did not always benefit from a corporate approach to help to share best practice and ensure consistency.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. Significant progress had been made in meeting the recommendations of the last report. Health and safety concerns had been addressed. Better systems for gathering information on the strengths and development needs of the school had been introduced. Assessment information had not been compared to international standards. This hindered the school's ability to measure accurately students' attainment or evaluate the impact of their progress over time and across subjects to inform teaching and learning. Formal observations of learning and teaching were at an early stage of identifying strengths and weaknesses.

Partnerships with parents and the community were acceptable. The quality and regularity of communications with parents had improved. Parents helped the school with field trips, events and the National Day. Some had attended recent workshops on key aspects of the work of the school. A Parent Committee provided an open forum for discussion. Reports to parents on their children's progress provided insufficient information on how they might help them improve. Positive links had been established with other schools and the wider community. This had supported staff development as well as helping students develop their understanding of the local environment.

Governance was acceptable. The Board of Governors had recently expanded to include a parent and wider professional representation. The Board had started to make a positive impact in supporting the school through helping it evaluate its strengths and development needs. A meeting held recently with parents helped explain the purpose of the Board. It had yet to establish a more formal means through which parents could have their views represented in advising and holding the school accountable.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. Teachers had benefited from recent staff development and specialist appointments. Facilities were well maintained. Resources were acceptable although teachers were making many of their own teaching aids. Two new buildings provided additional classrooms including computer and science labs. There remained issues over the overcrowding in some classrooms. The library was adequate but not well resourced. Outdoor play areas were appropriate and well shaded.

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:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?				
100% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.				
Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?

Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?

Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?

Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good	Good	Good
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Good	Good	Good	Good

How good are teaching and learning?

Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Quality of students' learning	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Curriculum quality	Good	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?

Age group:	KG	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Health and safety	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of support	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Acceptable
Governance	Acceptable
Staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

How well does the school perform overall?

Acceptable

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.

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.

Copyright 2011

This report is for internal use only and for the self-evaluation purposes of the school. It should not be used for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement.