

Emirates International School - Jumeirah Inspection Report

Kindergarten (Foundation Stage) to Post-16

Report published May 2011

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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.

Emirates International School - Jumeirah was inspected in February 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 Umm Al Sheif, Emirates International School - Jumeirah is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to post-16, aged four to 18 years. The school was making the transition from a UK curriculum to the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum. The Principal had been appointed shortly before the inspection commenced. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,859 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to an on-line questionnaire completed by parents. Most parents said they were happy with the quality of education available. A majority of parents were satisfied with their children's progress in Islamic Education, Arabic, mathematics and science while a smaller number were satisfied with progress in English. A significant minority thought teaching and learning were less than good while most were happy with the extra-curricular opportunities provided. A majority of respondents felt there were sufficient equipment and learning resources and that the behaviour of students was at least satisfactory. A majority said their children did not need a lot of additional help at home and that the students were treated fairly. A majority stated that the school was helpful with future career choices, promoted a healthy lifestyle and dealt effectively with bullying. Almost all felt their children were safe at school. Most said they were happy with communication from the school and the school's responses to parental concerns. They expressed satisfaction with the timing and content of reports and parent-teacher meetings, while a smaller number were

happy with the level of parental involvement in the work of the school. A majority said the school was well led. A significant number of respondents felt the school had not responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection and that there were limited improvements since. The greatest strength of the school was identified as the teaching, while the examination results and the promotion of Emirati culture were areas prompting most parental concerns.

How well does the school perform overall?

Emirates International School – Jumeirah provided a good quality of education, overall. The school performed effectively in almost all aspects of its work and delivered well on its promise to parents. The school had made good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report and the capacity of the school to improve further was good.

Attainment across the key subjects was good, with the exception of English and Arabic as an additional language, where it was acceptable. Progress was good in almost all key subjects at all phases of the school. There had been significant improvement in Islamic Education and mathematics in the primary grades. Teaching for effective learning was good. The school had made a positive response to the recent changes in leadership and the new senior leadership team set a positive standard for students, parents, teachers and other leaders. Self-evaluation arrangements were good and the school's understanding of its current status was realistic and specific.

Key features of the school

- The new senior leadership team had worked effectively to set a new direction for the school;
- Students and teachers demonstrated very positive relationships throughout the school;
- A wide range of interesting and relevant extra-curricular activities was available to all students;
- There was a clear vision for the curriculum that had widespread support as its implementation began;
- There was improvement in Islamic Education and mathematics in the primary phase.

Recommendations

- Continue to raise attainment and progress across key subjects;
- Ensure greater consistency in teaching and learning for adhering to the principles of the IB curriculum;
- Improve the quality of assessment across the school through the effective use of data in lessons;
- Set ambitious cohort and individual attainment targets and ensure that learning outcomes are identified and shared effectively;

- Continue the implementation of the IB curriculum across the school based on a sound understanding of its principles and practice.

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

Overall, attainment and progress in Islamic Education were good. Most students could recite the verses of The Holy Qur'an with an understanding of the general meaning of the verses. In the primary grades most students had basic knowledge of Islamic principles such as daily prayers, the pillars of Islam and the articles of faith. In secondary classes the majority of students had good knowledge about the Prophet Mohammad's life (PBUH), his companions and followers. They also understood Islamic values and explained how they applied them in their daily lives. In post-16 grades, most students were able to discuss the place of women, marriage and divorce in Islam. They could list the different types of marriages. However, only a few could explain in detail their duties and responsibilities as Muslims.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as a first language were good. Most students had good listening skills. They were able to follow instructions accurately and could understand and respect the views of others. Most students had a rich vocabulary of words in standard Arabic and they were able to express themselves using a wide range of terms and ideas. Almost all students read confidently with few errors; they could read both familiar and unfamiliar texts well. They could interpret the plots and predict the outcomes of the stories accurately. The majority of students had good writing skills; they wrote imaginatively and in a variety of genres. However, only a few students had an appropriate level of grammatical understanding and could apply it independently.

Attainment and progress in Arabic as an additional language were acceptable. Across the school listening skills were the strongest of all skills. Most students were able to understand most spoken words and follow instructions accurately. The majority of students had a range of vocabulary and they could express themselves using simple sentences however they struggled when using standard Arabic. Most students could read familiar words and short sentences. They had difficulty in pronouncing a few letters. Across the school the majority of students' skills in extended writing were underdeveloped and limited to a few words or sentences. There were insufficient opportunities for creative writing or extended writing. A minority of students had a basic knowledge of grammar and only a few students could apply grammar rules in wider contexts.

Attainment in English was acceptable in all stages. Progress was acceptable in Kindergarten 2 but good in the primary, secondary and post-16 grades. Many Kindergarten children began school with limited English and quickly expanded their vocabularies. A few read and spoke fluently. Most made progress in recognising and speaking words and phrases, but had too few opportunities to explore language creatively or use full sentences. Attainment in the primary years varied widely. The initial deficit in English had not been fully overcome but students were making strong progress, especially in Grades 4 to 6. Written work sometimes showed a rich vocabulary. Generally, reading, speaking and listening were secure, showing signs of a

positive response to recent curriculum changes. In secondary and post-16 classes, results on external tests broadly matched international expectations but the school enabled students, including those learning English as a second language, to make good progress.

Attainment and progress in mathematics in Kindergarten 2 and in the primary grades were good. In the secondary and post-16 grades, attainment was acceptable and progress was good. Kindergarten children had sound knowledge of numbers, could identify two-dimensional shapes and could create repeating patterns. They had not developed deeper understanding of abstract concepts through play and practical activities and their mathematical language skills were not well-developed. Grade 6 students had strong mental arithmetic skills and could quickly recall multiplication facts. In Grade 11 students were able to use mental arithmetic to support learning in other areas of mathematics and made good progress in solving equations. Opportunities to use mathematics as a tool across the curriculum were limited. .

In science, students' attainment and progress in Kindergarten and primary, were good. In secondary, attainment was acceptable and progress was good. Among post-16 students attainment and progress were good. Throughout the school students were developing enquiry skills well. Kindergarten children quickly learned which foods were healthy. Grade 6 students had good knowledge of the human body. A few Grade 7 students applied their knowledge of acids and alkalis to understand the safety of household materials. Grade 9 students raised questions and used their knowledge of genetics to discuss cloning. Grade 10 students had difficulty making predictions. A few students in Grade 11 were not able to differentiate between voltage and current. In post-16, students identified isomers and discussed ultra-filtration within kidneys.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Almost all the students' behaviour and attitudes were good. They behaved responsibly and maturely, co-operating and helping each other well. Students enjoyed very good relationships with teachers and were respectful to them; this was reciprocated. Across the school almost all had good levels of self-discipline. In the lower primary grades a few students were often too intent on pleasing the teacher rather than completing tasks for their own good. Most of the oldest students did not show sufficient freedom of engagement and expression in lessons as expected in an IB school. Students demonstrated positive attitudes towards healthy living. Attendance was acceptable. Almost all students arrived in good time for lessons, but there were inconsistent approaches to managing students who arrived late.

Students' civic understanding, their understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were good in Kindergarten, primary and high school; these were outstanding at post-16. Almost all students took their roles and responsibilities seriously and enjoyed taking on leadership roles. Most students contributed to the life of the school and participated in a range of activities and events. Post-16 students were fully involved in contributing to the community by planning and implementing a range of business projects for charity and aid relief. For example, they made contributions to the Charity Golf Tournament, 'Sweet & Treat' and the Labour Loyalty Projects. Students demonstrated a good understanding

and awareness of the impact of Islam on Dubai and the UAE. Most students had good age-appropriate knowledge of a range of UAE traditions and customs and what the UAE was doing to raise the awareness of expatriates of the UAE's heritage.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was outstanding across all stages of the school. Children in Kindergarten knew that Dubai was a holiday destination and that tourists stayed in hotels and enjoyed shopping. Older students were knowledgeable about the history of Dubai and its growth in recent years and knew that it depended largely on tourism to support its economy. They were involved in various projects to develop their business acumen and made a positive contribution to society by donating profits to worthy local causes. They set an excellent example for younger students in caring for the school and wider environment and were proactive in organising recycling programmes. They were conscious of the need to reduce their carbon footprints and suggested innovative ways by which this might happen.

How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching for effective learning was good across the school. Teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and most were able to put this into meaningful contexts for their students. Teachers in the upper school had good knowledge about the examination expectations in post-16, and this helped support students' good progress. Almost all lessons were well planned with appropriate activities which allowed students to consolidate and practise their learning. Time was managed well. Most teachers used questions effectively to check for understanding and, in the better lessons, teachers' questions promoted higher order thinking. In the less effective lessons, teachers spoke for long periods of time and over directed activities. Consequently, more than a few students were disengaged and they had fewer opportunities to be practically involved in lessons. Most teachers used resources well to engage students and created positive and safe learning environments. Although teachers planned activities to meet the range of student needs, this was not consistently reflected in practice.

The quality of student learning across the school was good. Most students enjoyed their lessons and had started to take greater responsibility for their own learning. They engaged with their teachers and each other effectively to improve their understanding and application of knowledge. They worked well in groups, pairs and independently when prompted to do so. Students were keen on helping others and used resources collaboratively to promote learning. However, in most lessons students were just beginning to develop their critical thinking skills and were not confident enough to form hypotheses, arrive at appropriate conclusions or ask searching questions. These were developing features of their learning.

The quality of assessment across the school was acceptable. The school was in the process of establishing new primary and high school assessment systems. Procedures were in place to construct clear and easy data for teachers regarding students' examination and test results. These data were analysed by senior staff members in both schools to create an overview of trends. However, the information was not consistently used by teachers to identify individual student's strengths, areas for development and next learning steps. The assessment information generally lacked the information necessary to adapt the curriculum.

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

The curriculum was acceptable. The school had identified a lack of coherence caused by the use of standards and practices drawn from many different curricular sources. Implementation of a continuous, broad and balanced IB curriculum from Kindergarten up to the established IB Diploma Programme (IBDP) at post-16 had recently begun, using the IB Primary Years and Middle Years programmes. IBDP courses provided appropriate and challenging learning for the more academically able secondary students. However, for a few students, these courses did not provide appropriate opportunities for the students to demonstrate their skills and acquired understanding. The school was aware that curriculum review was needed to create more effective transitions between the primary and secondary school, and between IGCSE and IBDP courses. Action was underway to address this issue and such steps had been particularly effective in mathematics and science. There were limited cross-curricular learning opportunities and the development of independent learning skills were in need of improvement. Curriculum planning did not fully meet the needs of less proficient English language learners. A rich variety of extra-curricular activities gave students a choice of sporting, artistic and musical experiences. There were also opportunities to participate in expeditions and service activities both locally and overseas, which provided links to the wider community.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Arrangements for the health and safety of students were good. Staff members had very caring attitudes toward students and the school had effective support procedures. All health, safety and security matters had carefully designed policies which were implemented consistently. Transport arrangements, especially the management of the buses, were very effective in ensuring safety. The school's premises were in good order and posed no evident risks. Indeed, they offered very good provision of safe play areas, appropriate settings for all subjects and extensive outdoor shaded zones for students. Maintenance was efficient and records of illness and incidents were kept up to date and secure. The school was good at promoting healthy lifestyles and choices. It had effective policies on school meals and packed lunches. There was impressive scope for physical activity at break times, in the curriculum and in extra-curricular sport or expeditions. Child protection arrangements were good, with prominent reminders to staff and students about key contacts.

The quality of support was good. Good relationships prevailed both in lessons and in less formal settings. This helped ensure effective yet unobtrusive behaviour management. Students found teachers easy to approach for advice and guidance. There were good procedures in place to guide them on careers and university entrance. Excellent medical support was given by a well qualified team. The tracking of their academic progress was acceptable but rapidly improving. Support for students with learning difficulties or English language needs was also acceptable. There was scope for this to be more effective in mainstream classes, not just in withdrawal sessions. The school was working well to raise attendance levels.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership was good. The two new principals had worked collaboratively and effectively to define and share a new direction for the school. In a short period of time the commitment and understanding of teachers, parents and governors to their vision had developed cohesively. There was a well-developed sense of common ownership of the curriculum and teaching planned for the students. Sound leadership qualities focused on meaningful distribution of responsibilities through teams at subject, grade and curriculum levels. Leaders were committed to raising attainment and establishing an effective IB curriculum in the school.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. In a short period the senior leaders had set in place practical measures to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum. The school knew its strengths and areas for development clearly. Well-constructed action plans based on realistic success criteria were in place. The school had developed a good teacher appraisal system and there was a sound grasp of the challenges of implementing the IB curriculum in all phases. There was good progress in addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. A new parents' advisory group had been formed and was having positive effects upon the school. Parents were excited to be involved and they had begun work on a range of projects aimed at supporting learning and raising attainment. There was awareness of the importance of engagement with curriculum leaders. The new teaching methods challenged parents' perceptions of how their children learn. While pleased overall with the degree and quality of communication, there was a keen interest in participating in the design of new reporting methods. The school had good community links which engaged the students with various business, charities and service-based organisations.

Governance was acceptable. Representatives of the owners supported the senior leaders and provided advice on budgetary and future development issues. This work was productive and there was clear understanding of the challenges of the new IB curriculum. Less developed was the participation of various stakeholders in this work. There was a need to ensure that the plans and developments of the IB curriculum was fully understood by the school community.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. After significant teacher upheaval, the staff numbers were appropriate to the needs of the students. Teacher assistants were present where necessary but their deployment was not as productive as it could have been. The facilities were well-maintained and respected by the school community. Library stock, while adequate, was in need of expansion to meet the new curriculum needs of the students. As part of this development students' access to the latest learning technologies had begun.

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:	Kindergarten (Foundation Stage)	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?				
35% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.				
Age group:	Kindergarten (Foundation Stage)	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Good	Good	Good
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable

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

Age group:	Kindergarten (Foundation Stage)	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

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

Age group:	Kindergarten (Foundation Stage)	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good	Good

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

Age group:	Kindergarten (Foundation Stage)	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Good
Progress over time	Good	Good	Good	Good

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

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

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?				
Age group:	Kindergarten (Foundation Stage)	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Good

Next steps

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

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:
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More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.

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