

INSPECTION REPORT

Al Basateen Kindergarten - Al Khawaneej

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Knowledge and Human Development Authority

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Al Basateen Kindergarten - Al Khawaneej

Location	Al Khawaneej
Type of school	Private
Website	Click here to enter text.
Telephone	04-2892261
Address	P.O Box 78595, Dubai
Principal	Fatma Al Abdullah
Curriculum	MOE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-5 / Kindergarten 1 to 2
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	110
Number of Emirati students	54 (49%)
Date of the inspection	Sunday 11th December 2011 to Monday 12th December 2011

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The context of the school

Located in Al Khawaneej, Al Basateen Kindergarten is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten 1 to Kindergarten 2, ages three to five years. The school follows a Ministry of Education curriculum. The school is part of a non-profit social institution, Dubai's Women's Association.

At the time of inspection there were 110 children on roll. The attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable, but had improved since last year.

All teachers in the school were qualified but not all had early childhood education qualifications. The school served an Arab population with 50 per cent Emirati children.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

Al Basateen Kindegarten – Al Khawaneej provided an acceptable quality of education overall. The school served the local community well and provided a warm and welcoming family ethos in which children were nurtured and well-cared for. The school ensured that children were educated in a safe environment. Attainment in Islamic Education, Arabic and English was good, whereas in mathematics and science, it was acceptable. Progress in all key subjects remained acceptable, mainly due to the low levels of challenge to children in the majority of lessons and activities that were not always well planned to meet their wide range of learning needs.

Whilst individual judgements had not improved, the school had made some progress towards addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. For example, the curriculum review had led to improved opportunities for children to learn in the local community and better progression from Kindergarten 1 to 2. There was still insufficiently rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment all of which remained at an acceptable level. Whilst the overall care and well-being of children was a priority, the school had not identified those with special educational needs and teachers' understanding of how to support such children was limited. The school had not carried out comprehensive self-evaluation, but leaders had identified strengths and areas for development and they had sufficient capacity to improve further.

Key strengths

- Warm, welcoming ethos and positive relationships;
- Committed teachers who were keen to improve;
- Improved opportunities for children to learn within the local community;
- Children with good understanding of local traditions and Islamic values.

Recommendations

- Further review the curriculum, teaching and learning to add greater challenge for all children and so raise attainment and improve progress in key subjects;
- Ensure that assessment, including baseline assessment, is rigorous and directly linked to learning outcomes;
- Use the DSIB self-evaluation document and tools to create an improvement plan which has measurable success criteria, defined responsibilities and precise timelines.

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

Kindergarten	
Islamic Education	
Attainment	Good
Progress	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language	
Attainment	Good
Progress	Acceptable
Arabic as an additional language	
Attainment	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable
English	
Attainment	Good
Progress	Acceptable
Mathematics	
Attainment	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable
Science	
Attainment	Acceptable
Progress	Acceptable

Attainment in the key subjects was variable, with good attainment in Islamic Education, Arabic and English and acceptable attainment in mathematics and science. In Islamic Education, children were able to recite and memorize short Qur'an verses and understood and applied Islamic etiquette and values to their daily lives. Children attained well in Arabic with good pronunciation and effective application of alphabetic knowledge to words. Children entered the school with little or no English and attainment was therefore

low to begin with. However, by the end of Kindergarten 2, attainment was just above expected levels in all aspects apart from writing where it was under-developed. In mathematics, number work was a strength but children did not have well developed problem solving skills and their science investigation skills were limited. Emirati children achieved similar attainment levels to all children in the key subjects.

Progress across the key subjects was acceptable for most children, including Emirati children. Those experiencing difficulties in learning made acceptable progress overall. However, low levels of challenge in most lessons restricted the progress of all children and especially those who were capable of attaining good levels or those requiring support. The lack of opportunities to develop skills in learning also contributed to slow progress across the key subjects. For example, in science lessons children mostly observed experiments rather than finding things out for themselves. In mathematics, the focus was on numbers, with little attention given to problem solving or measurement. In writing in Arabic and English, children's progress was affected by the lack of opportunities to write beyond copying or colouring.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Kindergarten
Attitudes and behaviour	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Good
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Good

Most children demonstrated good behaviour during lessons. They interacted well and were mostly respectful to each other and their teachers. They were able to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy lifestyles, and had positive attitudes towards healthy living and exercise. Kindergarten 2 children displayed a growing sense of independence. Attendance during the last semester, as reported by the school was acceptable but was poor during the inspection.

Across the school, childrens' Islamic and cultural understanding was good. They had strong knowledge of Islam and practiced Islamic values in their actions towards each other in school. Almost all children had deep understanding of the heritage and local traditions of the UAE. Nevertheless, their understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Dubai needed further development. Emirati students showed great pride in their culture and shared this with their friends.

Children understood about money and its value and demonstrated a simple understanding of environmental issues. They were mostly responsible and were proud of their roles in school. Most could name jobs they would like to have in the future. Children knew the important landmarks of Dubai, such as the Burj Khalifa and why these made Dubai special. They were aware of the need to improve the environment and kept their school clean and tidy.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Kindergarten
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable

Most teachers knew their subjects well but their understanding of how young children learn was underdeveloped. This meant that lessons were often dominated by teachers, uninspired and lacking good pace. Therefore, children were not always engaged in appropriate activities. Lessons were planned but often planning did not take into account the children's starting points. This resulted in the higher and lower attaining children not being able to make good progress. In too many lessons, objectives were vague and often unrelated to the activities planned. Teachers often spoke for too long in lessons and did not allow children to ask questions or have enough time to think of answers. Most teachers gave too few opportunities for children to find things out themselves. A few teachers used learning resources well but this aspect was a weakness overall. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) by teachers to promote learning was very limited.

Most children enjoyed lessons and were keen to learn. They interacted well with their teachers and were eager to answer questions. Questioning quality, however, was variable and too many questions were closed, requiring only simple one-word responses. Teachers often did not understand the strategies needed to develop independent learners. This meant that children were often too dependent on adults for support and guidance. When working in groups, children shared the limited resources and patiently took turns. However, children rarely had opportunities to find things out for themselves and this restricted the development of critical thinking skills. In one science lesson, children were engaged in sorting and classifying materials, leading to good learning and progress. A few children made links in their learning but this was a weakness overall.

There had been some improvement in assessment systems and processes with the introduction of a simple baseline assessment. Teachers knew the children's basic starting points upon entry to Kindergarten 1, but the assessment lacked rigour and was not closely related to the desired learning outcomes. Monthly reports on progress helped teachers report to parents on a basic range of information about their children. Overall, the assessments carried out lacked clear references to skill development. Parents requested more extensive information on personal and social development. Oral feedback to children was inconsistent and at times did not show them how to improve. Assessment information was not used effectively to improve teaching and learning across all classes. For example, lessons often failed to promote learning for those children who had already acquired the knowledge being taught.

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

	Kindergarten
Curriculum quality	Acceptable

The curriculum was based on a clear rationale and had recently been enhanced by Ministry of Education approved materials in mathematics, science and English. It was generally broad and balanced and included most subjects. Despite a recent review, the curriculum had not been enriched enough to meet the needs of all young learners. For example, practical activities, exploring, finding out and communicating were missing across most subjects. Young children did not enjoy enough first-hand experiences of the world around them and much of their learning was through rote learning and recall. Nevertheless, there had been a few additional opportunities to learn within the local community with visits to farms, gardens and shops which the children loved and which enhanced their understanding. The curriculum was largely driven by worksheets. There was improved progression from Kindergarten 1 to 2. However, there was a mismatch between the curriculum activities and the desired outcomes. This, together with the low curriculum expectations and lack of challenge, impeded children's progress. There were still too few opportunities for children to solve problems in mathematics or carry out investigations in science and choice was very limited. Teachers were aware of the importance of play but had yet to develop play through the curriculum.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Kindergarten
Health and Safety	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were good. Staff members throughout the school took their duty of care seriously. Clear expectations and well established routines throughout the day and on the school buses ensured the safety of children. Fire drills were carried out at appropriate intervals. Medicines and children's personal records were kept securely and their health was monitored carefully. Healthy living was reflected in the curriculum and promoted effectively with careful monitoring of lunchboxes and the involvement of parents. Most staff members knew about the child protection arrangements.

The quality of support for students was acceptable overall. Relations between staff members and children were caring and positive. Most teachers managed behaviour appropriately but a few could not manage the behaviour of Kindergarten 1 children in lessons. Children were well prepared for the transition to Cycle 1 schools. The checking of attendance and punctuality was mostly effective, although there were some persistent late arrivals in the mornings which disrupted learning. Teachers provided some extra support to children in lessons, but overall the meeting of children's individual needs was a weakness.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Good
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

The leadership of the school continued to be good overall. The Principal communicated a vision that was clear to most staff members but not understood by all. The whole school team was united in their dedication to improvement. Middle managers and teachers had responded well to professional development opportunities but the impact of it was yet to be realised. The Principal was well supported by the subject leaders, but not all understood how to improve attainment in their subjects. Relations amongst the staff team were a key strength, with all working together to bring about improvements. The school team had acceptable capacity to improve further.

The school did not complete a self-evaluation document prior to inspection. However, the principal had involved every staff member in evaluating various aspects of the school. This had been supported with focused professional development and visits to other schools. Some improvements were apparent as a result, notably in the curriculum. Lesson observations lacked formality. There was a need to monitor the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously and relate it directly to performance management. There had been a positive response to the inspection recommendations but action planning lacked measurable success criteria and precise timelines. The result was that whilst there had been improvements in provision, they had failed to impact positively on children's attainment and progress. Overall, there had not been a clear enough focus on improving the outcomes for children.

The school enjoyed very positive partnerships with the parents and local community. Parents were supportive of the school, especially as they believed that their children were happy and fulfilled. They appreciated access to affordable education and the welcome they received when visiting the school. Communication between home and school was regular and effective in supporting learning. Teachers were highly accessible and approachable and quickly resolved any issues raised by parents. Monthly reports on children's progress were welcomed but parents thought that more information on personal and social development was needed. Parents were involved in the life of the school and their children's learning. A few parents helped in school to support learning.

The Kindergarten was governed through the Dubai Women's Association. This group supported the school well and viewed it as a valuable part of the local community. The governors had a clear overview of and strong commitment to the Kindergarten. The Board ensured school fees were affordable and this group was central to the plans to secure funding for a new building. Regular and comprehensive reports on the school's progress were provided by the Principal to the board and they had enabled members to track the school's progress more effectively. Nevertheless, a greater focus was needed to ensure good outcomes for children.

The school was well managed and teachers were mostly well qualified. The children did not benefit from classroom assistants to support their learning. The building remained of basic quality, although teachers tried to enliven it with children's pictures. Resources were adequate but were not always well used by teachers to enhance the learning experiences of children. The outdoor play area required a more suitable surface. The provision of ICT was very limited, as were reading resources in Arabic and English and general resources to support activity based learning. A few teachers supplemented the resources with home-made items which helped learning and engagement.

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	16	15%
	Last year	9	8%
Teachers	5		71%
Students	There are no upper secondary-aged students in the school		

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

A small minority of parents responded to the survey, but a few more than last year. A majority of teachers responded to their survey. Parents held broadly positive views about the school and believed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects. Parents also believed that their children were safe and well cared for at school. Teachers had positive views about the school across a range of aspects.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan should address:

- Recommendations from DSIB;
- Areas identified by the school as requiring improvement;
- Other external reports or sources of information that comment on the work of the school;
- Priorities arising from the school's unique characteristics.

The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:
inspection@khda.gov.ae

Our work with schools

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) inspects schools to inform parents, students and the wider community of the quality of education provided. Inspectors also give guidance to staff about how to improve the standard of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the principal and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan our time in school. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which students are involved. We also gather the views of students, parents and staff. We find their views very helpful and use them, together with the other information we have collected, to arrive at our view regarding the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well students are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and children work together and how they go about improving the school. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

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