

INSPECTION REPORT

The Elite English School

Report published in February 2012

Knowledge and Human Development Authority

P.O. Box 500008, UAE, Tel: +971-4-3640000, Fax: +971-4-3640001, info@khda.gov.ae, www.khda.gov.ae

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT The Elite English School

Location	Deira
Type of school	Private
Website	www.eliteenglishschool.com
Telephone	04-2688244
Address	PO Box 51212, Dubai
Principal	Mrs. Vatsala Mathai
Curriculum	Indian(CBSE)
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-16 / Kindergarten to Grade 10
Attendance	Good
Number of students on roll	930
Number of Emirati students	0
Date of the inspection	Monday 10th October 2011 to Thursday 13th October 2011

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The context of the school

The English Elite School is situated in Deira. During the inspection the school had a total roll of 930 students aged three to 16 years, an enrolment gain of 25 per cent over the preceding school year. The school followed the Indian Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum.

There were 57 teachers, 30 of whom had appropriate teaching qualifications. A quarter of the teachers were newly appointed. Teachers of younger students were supported by 12 teaching assistants. Students were grouped into 36 regular classes and four classes for students with special educational needs. Thirty five percent of the students were in the Kindergarten and Grade 1 classes. Ten different nationalities were represented among the student population. Students of Indian nationality comprised about 60 per cent, Pakistani 14 per cent and Filipino 12 per cent.

There had been significant staff turnover and enrolment since the previous inspection.

Overall school performance 2011-2012

Acceptable

How has the school progressed since the last inspection?

The English Elite School provided an acceptable quality of education. Good features included the attainment and progress students made in the upper grades and the progress made by students with significant needs as a result of support in the specialist provision. The quality of teaching was good in the middle and secondary grades. However, it was only acceptable in the primary grades and unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten.

The school had made limited progress towards addressing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Four mobile projectors had been installed for use in the secondary classrooms to further develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills. There remained a significant need for more ICT equipment in the school. The school had introduced an individualised student record system to communicate performance to parents and to group students according to their abilities and needs. The school increased sharing of better practices to bring about higher quality of teaching.

However, such sharing was insufficient to bring about the desired results. The school had not made progress on the fourth recommendation, to raise attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic. The school had sufficient capacity to improve further.

Key strengths

- Attainment and progress in middle and secondary grades;
- Progress and inclusion of students with significant learning needs;
- Students' positive attitudes toward learning and their courteous behaviour;
- The quality of relationships within the school and between home and school.

Recommendations

- Improve students' attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic across the school;
- Ensure that the time allocated to teaching Arabic as an additional language is fully compliant with Ministry of Education regulations;
- Urgently review the provision of curriculum and teaching in Kindergarten to ensure that students' learning needs are met;
- Improve the self-evaluation process, including the use of data, to accurately identify areas for improvement;
- Address the weaknesses in the management of staffing, facilities and resources as identified in this report.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable
English				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good	Good
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good	Good

Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable in the primary through secondary grades. Most students had basic knowledge of Islamic concepts such as the pillars of Islam and they had detailed knowledge of prayers. However, recitation skills were not well developed. Attainment in Arabic as an additional language was acceptable in the primary and secondary grades but unsatisfactory in the middle grades,

where there were significant gaps in listening, oral and written expression skills. Most students were able to understand and follow instructions and respond to questions. Arabic speaking skills of a majority of students were generally limited. Attainment in English was good in the middle and secondary grades, where most students demonstrated the ability to read and analyse texts and express themselves well. English attainment was acceptable in the primary grades but unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten. Kindergarten and early primary students had not developed a strong foundation in reading skills. Attainment in mathematics was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good at the remaining levels. Kindergarten students developed basic number skills. Older students demonstrated proficiency in numeration, computation and geometry. Attainment in science was unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten, acceptable in the primary grades, and good in the middle and secondary levels. In Kindergarten 2, most students were unable to explain differences between objects or the identifying characteristics of animals. Students demonstrated increased understanding of scientific concepts and investigative skills in higher grades. Older students' good mathematical skills enabled them to manipulate scientific formulae correctly.

Progress in English, mathematics and science was unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten. Progress in the primary grades was acceptable in all subjects except mathematics, where it was good. Progress in Islamic Education was acceptable in the middle and secondary levels. Progress in Arabic was unsatisfactory in the middle grades and acceptable in the secondary grades. The progress of middle and secondary grade students was good in English, mathematics and science, usually due to well-designed lessons with clear objectives. The progress of students with special needs was good in the specialist classes, due to teaching which was well focused on the students' individual needs. The progress of those students during their periods of inclusion in regular classrooms ranged from unsatisfactory to good. In poorer quality lessons tasks were not well matched to their specific learning needs.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Attitudes and behaviour	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islam and appreciation of local traditions and culture	Acceptable	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Civic, economic and environmental understanding	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

Attitudes and behaviour were acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the primary, middle, and secondary levels. Relationships between students and staff were good. Most students made healthy food choices and had well-developed awareness of healthy life styles. Attendance was good overall. Civic and Islamic understanding was enhanced through the student council and community charity work. Students reflected on the importance of Islam in the multi-cultural context of Dubai. A majority of students were able to explain the traditions of the UAE. The quality of economic and environmental understanding was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good in the rest of the school. Most students had developed a good understanding of how Dubai has developed through the last few decades. Still developing was a deeper awareness of global environmental issues and how they have impacted Dubai.

How good are the teaching, learning and assessment?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Teaching for effective learning was good in the middle and secondary grades, acceptable in the primary grades and unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten. Most teachers had good subject knowledge but their understanding of how students learn was underdeveloped, particularly in the early primary grades and the Kindergarten. Middle school teaching, particularly in Arabic as an additional language, English and science did not challenge students appropriately. Kindergarten and primary grade lesson planning did not take into account how children learn. As a result, the learning needs of Kindergarten children were not met satisfactorily, and the higher and lower attaining younger primary students did not achieve well enough. Across the range of subjects, most teachers planned to meet their learning objectives. However, in Kindergarten lessons, objectives were imprecise and this limited the development and learning opportunities of the children. Planning for different groups of learners did not consistently provide sufficient challenge for them to make good progress. In mathematics lessons primary, middle and secondary teachers used dialogue and questions well to develop students' understanding. The use of information and communications technology to support student learning was limited across the school. The school offered lessons in other subjects, including vocational education in resource rooms, computers, PE, Hindi, social studies, accounting, art, and music. Over a range of subjects the quality of teaching was variable, ranging from unsatisfactory to good.

Learning was good in the secondary grades, acceptable in middle and primary grades and unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten. Kindergarten children did not have enough opportunities to develop their independence and they rarely worked without constant teacher direction. Kindergarten children did not find things out themselves and this limited their learning. In mathematics, students made connections in science, found things out for themselves and solved probability problems. However, learning was inconsistent in Arabic because students did not know what was expected of them. A large majority of younger primary students,

particularly in English and science, could not apply their learning in everyday life. This restricted their ability to solve problems and attain at higher levels. Students' independent enquiry skills and use of ICT to measure, record and analyse were not developed well.

Assessment was of acceptable quality overall. In the Kindergarten it was unsatisfactory because teachers did not use assessment information skillfully to plan activities; as a result, children made unsatisfactory progress. Although much information was gathered across the rest of the school, primary teachers in lower grades did not use it effectively to identify appropriate learning objectives across all subjects. Feedback to students was mostly oral but was limited because lessons were mostly teacher led and opportunities to share strengths and weaknesses with students were restricted. Teachers' marking was inconsistent and did not provide clear advice to show students how to improve. The school did not track the attainment and progress of specific groups of students.

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

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The overall quality of the curriculum was acceptable in most phases. The exception was the curriculum for the Kindergarten, which was unsatisfactory. It lacked coherence and continuity in order to meet the learning needs of young children. The rigid processes did not provide adequate opportunities for play and investigation. The strict adherence to the specified examination syllabus promoted an over-reliance on textbooks. The curriculum did not comply with statutory requirements in relation to the time allocation for Arabic. Continuity in the subject programs between successive phases was adequate but the planning for the progression of different groups of students was not sufficiently developed. The curriculum for students with significant educational needs in specialist provision met their needs well. Periodic reviews by subject co-ordinators were appropriately arranged and modifications made such as the implementation of investigative work by the mathematics department. The frequent lack of variety in lesson designs did not adequately promote research and critical thinking skills. Cross-curricular features were evident in the use of mathematical competences in science lessons. A strong enrichment program was evident in the activities sessions which provided a range of opportunities in drama, yoga, art and music. Students productively enhanced environment through tree and flower planting.

How well does the school protect and support students?

	Pre-Primary (KG)	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Good	Good	Good	Good

Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety were good at all levels. The premises were clean and tidy. Established routines and supervision throughout the day ensured student and staff safety. Bus loading procedures were well supervised. The school corrected a pattern of non-use of seat belts on buses. Medicines and students' personal records were kept securely. A full-time nurse and a part-time physician monitored students' health, including that of students of low or excessive weight. The nurse administered vaccinations to students. Healthy living was actively promoted, including inspection of students' lunches brought from home. Safety practices in science laboratories required improvement including, for example, the use of goggles, hand-protection and eye-wash stations. A policy for child protection procedures was distributed to teachers; however, a few teachers did not fully understand their responsibilities regarding child protection.

The quality of support for students was good overall. Students' personal well-being was a high priority for staff members. Relationships between staff and students were respectful. The management of students' behaviour and personal care was effective. Staff monitored attendance and punctuality. Parents of absent students were telephoned during the first day of absence, and patterns of tardiness were addressed. A part-time counselor, a teacher and an unofficial counselor provided individual guidance to students regarding behaviour, social issues, hygiene and academics. Students had easy access to the counselors. The school had not begun a program of career guidance for secondary students. Monitoring of and provision for students with special educational needs was rigorous in the resource rooms, where they made good progress. The school maintained a detailed individualised education plan for each student with special needs. The plans included comprehensive assessments and focused improvement objectives. The school conducted regular assessments of those students' attainment and progress. However, differentiation of teaching strategies to meet the needs of those students during their periods of inclusion in regular classroom was insufficient and their progress was typically weaker at those times.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

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

The quality of leadership of the school was acceptable. The school leaders were committed and well intentioned. They held a vision for the school and shared responsibility for its realisation. Evidence did not show a well-developed accountability system for ensuring quality outcomes. School leaders had developed a comprehensive evaluation instrument for observations of lessons. However, the written summaries did not contain specific improvement goals for individual teachers based on analyses of teaching performance. Relationships and communication among all levels of leadership were professional but not always productive. Leaders were not complacent and they demonstrated sufficient capacity to make required improvements.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The school had established self-evaluation processes but the processes did not provide a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Performance management arrangements were in place, but they did not sufficiently inform professional development. Improvement plans were positive and contained relevant targets, although they were not focused sharply. There had been moderate progress in addressing one of the four recommendations from the previous report.

Partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents were supportive of the school and believed that their children were progressing well. They appreciated having ready access to the school and they believed that any issues were quickly resolved. Regular communication, including periodic reports and teachers' comments, kept parents informed of their children's progress. The Principal regularly met and engaged in productive dialogue with an active parents association. Many students were taken to community organisations for charity work, for example, taking food to labour camps and visiting the elderly in hospitals. Students made connections with other schools, including sports tournaments.

Governance was good. The governors had a clear overview of and a strong commitment to the school. Board members were broadly representative of the school community. The governing board exerted a

positive influence on the school and played an important role in leading school improvement. The school and the board discussed the previous inspection report at length, and the board stated specific improvement steps that the school should take. The board had productive links with the parent association.

The quality of management, including staffing, facilities and resources was unsatisfactory. The day-to-day operation of the school was adequate but the school was not adequately staffed. Nearly half of the teachers lacked teaching qualifications and teaching in nearly one in five lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching assistants in the Kindergarten were not well deployed, as they typically waited and watched while teachers conducted whole class lessons. The premises were adequate, although classrooms were somewhat small. There was overcrowding in some classrooms. Science laboratories were poorly equipped with equipment and supplies, thereby hindering opportunities for meaningful experimentation and investigations. A lack of equipment reduced full participation in physical education activities. Classrooms were poorly equipped with supplies and learning aids. Nearly all lessons were conducted without provision of ICT for use by students or teachers.

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	109	12%
	Last year	251	35%
Teachers	19		33%
Students	61		80%

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

Only a few parents responded to the survey, a large drop from last year's response. Parents were generally satisfied with the quality of education available at the school and agreed that their children were making good progress in the key subjects. Parents' views on provision were positive across different aspects. A majority of parents believed that inspection had led to improvements at the school, a view shared by the teachers. Teachers held very positive views of the school, as did students.

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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