

Dubai Police Kindergarten - Deira Branch Inspection Report

Kindergarten

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.

Dubai Police Kindergarten - Deira Branch- was inspected in March 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 Al Waheidah, Dubai Police Kindergarten - Deira Branch is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten 1 to 2, aged three to five years. The school follows a Ministry of Education curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 60 children on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires issued to parents. Most parents thought the school was well led and they were appreciative of the education it offered their children, although they were slightly less convinced of their children's progress in science. They felt their children were safe and learned well and were treated fairly. Almost all noticed that their children were enthusiastic about learning and behaved well. Almost all parents believed the school provided them with useful and timely information about their children and the school's events and plans. School staff were responsive to their concerns, provided informative reports on their children's progress and offered regular opportunities for parents to be involved in the life of the school. They believed that children were encouraged to practise a healthy lifestyle.

How well does the school perform overall?

The Police Kindergarten - Deira provided an acceptable quality of education. The school had taken appropriate steps to address almost all of the recommendations from the previous report. The school had moved to a new facility which had enabled the implementation of significant changes in organisation and curriculum. Currently, the school day provided learning activities in a spacious child-friendly environment. Systems for lesson planning and assessment of children's learning had been introduced and were being consistently applied. There was still more work to be done in promoting children's language development, particularly their writing skills and in providing more opportunities for them to learn through independent or guided inquiry.

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education was good. Children could apply their knowledge to their daily lives at the school. Attainment in Arabic and English were good. Children across the school had very good listening skills and, by Kindergarten 2, they could repeat stories in their own words. Children performed to expected levels in mathematics. Their skills in number were strong, while measuring and problem-solving were weak as children had little opportunity to practice these skills. Attainment and progress in science were acceptable. Most children knew basic information about plants, animals and humans but their scientific skills did not develop enough through the exploration of materials and the opportunity to experiment and record observations. Teaching for effective learning was acceptable across the school. Most teachers showed good subject knowledge, but lacked an awareness of the skills and strategies to enable children to learn in more active and open-ended ways. There were good systems for collecting assessment data which had potential to be used to plan activities that could take children to the next stage of their learning. The quality of the curriculum was acceptable. It was based on Ministry of Education guidelines with mathematics taught in both Arabic and English. Arrangements for health, safety and security were good. Children's health and their personal and social well-being were carefully monitored. While their academic progress was rigorously recorded, records were not used to plan individualized learning experiences. Leadership was good and had brought staff together to bring about change with energy and enthusiasm.

Key features of the school

- Good attainment in Islamic Education, Arabic and English;
- A safe and caring ethos;
- Lively, friendly children who respect adults and their peers;
- Comprehensive systems to collect and process data about children's learning;
- A supportive relationship with the Police Authority and the Police Liaison Officer;
- A spacious, well-maintained, bright facility.

Recommendations

- Raise children's attainment in mathematics and science;
- Use the data collected on a daily basis to plan lessons matched to the needs of all the students;
- Provide more opportunities for children to learn actively in groups;
- Continue to build understanding among the Kindergarten staff of the teaching skills involved in active 'early years' education.

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

Children's attainment and progress in Islamic Education were good. Most children knew that Allah is the creator and Mohammad (PBUH) is his prophet. Most children knew that the kindness of Muslims is a source of inspiration for those around them and they could explain the rewards of being kind. The majority of children could recite short Surahs, but with some errors and could list the five daily prayers. Children were aware of the importance of being physically pure before prayer. The majority in Kindergarten 1 could memorise short Surahs. By Kindergarten 2, the majority of children could memorise longer Surahs but their recitation skills were underdeveloped.

Attainment in Arabic was good and progress was acceptable. By Kindergarten 2, most children enjoyed listening to a story and were able to answer key questions about the narrative. They were able to recognise most letters of the alphabet and a minority could read familiar words. Most children pronounced words correctly. Most children in Kindergarten 1 were making acceptable progress from their starting points in writing skills but by Kindergarten 2 only a few could use new vocabulary in an unfamiliar context. The majority in Kindergarten 2 children could write their names and copy a few words. Most children were able to express their feelings in simple and clear words, but only a few were able to use standard Arabic to form sentences.

Attainment and progress in English were good. Children started Kindergarten 1 as beginners in English and were learning the letters of the alphabet through songs, games and visual resources. By Kindergarten 2, they had attained good speaking skills and confidently identified consonant and vowel sounds and were able to match them with corresponding objects and words. Their listening skills were good and almost all children were able to follow their teachers' directions. Writing skills were good, with most children writing their names with upper- and lower-case letters. Most children had acquired early reading skills and had developed awareness of a story sequence through regular story sessions.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were acceptable. In both year groups there was a strong focus on counting, recognising and writing numerals correctly and recognition of geometric shapes. Almost all children had an age-appropriate knowledge and understanding of basic numbers and shape. In Kindergarten 1, they could count numbers up to 10 in both Arabic

and English and identify the numbers by their shape and pattern. They recognised and named various basic shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles. In Kindergarten 2, most children counted accurately beyond 10, some even up to 100, but they demonstrated weak skills using addition and subtraction. Overall, girls achieved better than the boys. Children's skills in problem-solving, data-handling and applying number were underdeveloped.

Attainment and progress in science were acceptable. Most children in Kindergarten 1 had acceptable factual knowledge and understanding of simple science concepts. The majority of children were aware of the stages of plant growth and could classify flowers according to size, shape and colour. In Kindergarten 2, children knew that plants needed water and sunlight to grow. However, key science vocabulary was underdeveloped and children found it difficult to explain their ideas. Skills of observing, questioning and responding were less well developed than knowledge of facts. Progress over time was acceptable but a few children failed to make the progress of which they were capable. They rarely found things out for themselves.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

The attitudes and behaviour of children were good. Children interacted positively towards each other and with staff. A harmonious and happy ethos characterised the school. Children's enjoyment of school was evident particularly during lessons, break times and sport sessions. They were motivated to learn and actively participated in all activities. Almost all children had positive attitudes towards healthy eating. Attendance and punctuality during the inspection were good although the school reported acceptable levels for the last semester.

Children's Islamic culture and civic understanding was good. Children understood their responsibilities towards their school, peers and family. They had good understanding of the importance of Islam. They knew that Muslims pray in a mosque. They knew how good Muslims present themselves and they were proud that they were Muslim. All children knew their culture well and they could describe it and found it interesting to talk about the differences between their culture and other cultures.

Economic and environmental understanding was good. Most children knew many aspects of how Dubai had developed. They could describe the differences between the old and the new houses and they enjoyed the new parks in Dubai. Children understood the importance of saving water to conserve the environment. Most children cared about the school environment. They kept it clean and tidy and they were aware of the need to use electricity and water carefully.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching for effective learning was acceptable. The majority of teachers demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge of their subject but a few lacked a sound grasp of appropriate methods for teaching younger children. Teachers created successful working relationships with the children and a few used questioning techniques which invited children to think critically. In the most effective lessons, teachers planned lessons which were

linked to the children's previous learning experiences. The learning objectives in the majority of lessons were clear but not always shared with children. In less effective lessons, teachers lacked knowledge of the teaching strategies required to engage actively with young children. There was an emphasis upon completing activities in each lesson, and teachers were less skilled in promoting children's understanding or skills through the activities. Reviews at the end of the lessons were rare and pace was often too slow. Almost all lessons lacked challenge and expectations were too low to ensure good progress. Teachers gave too few opportunities for children to find things out for themselves.

The quality of the children's learning was acceptable. Children enjoyed lessons and most were keen to learn, showing good concentration. When given the opportunity to do so, children willingly contributed to lessons by asking questions, although in weaker lessons these opportunities were few. Teachers did not always understand the strategies needed to develop independent learning and children were too dependent on adults for support and guidance. When working in groups, children shared resources and took turns. The lessons however were not well organised to maximize learning. Classroom assistants were not always effective in facilitating learning through questioning and actively engaging children in managing their learning. Consequently, for example, children sat passively whilst adults distributed the materials they needed.

The quality of assessment was acceptable. An improved focus on assessment in lessons did not always impact on attainment as information obtained was rarely used to adjust planning. The assessment system did not clearly identify aspects of skills being tracked which resulted in a lack of specific focus for improvement. Oral feedback to children was limited to praise with little guidance on how to do better. The school had developed systems to assess learning and communicated this information to parents but assessments were not based on a thorough analysis of the components of skills. Subsequently, the achievements reported to parents did not give a realistic view of attainment. In a few lessons, teachers reviewed learning at the end of lessons but they did not always use this information well to ensure sufficient challenge for higher attaining children. Despite a significant amount of time devoted to assessment in lessons, teachers failed to use the information gathered to plan to meet the learning needs of all children.

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

The curriculum was acceptable and followed the Ministry of Education guidance. It was broad and contributed well to the development of children's personal, social, physical and academic skills and their religious awareness. It was regularly reviewed by the teachers and school leaders. Staff placed appropriate significance upon Islam, national identity, health and English as features of the curriculum. There was improved continuity in most subjects so that teachers in Kindergarten 2 knew what children had covered before. The curriculum widened children's horizons through educational trips and receiving visitors at the school. Children were involved in municipal projects and visited places of interest in Dubai. Strong links with Dubai Police

provided useful contexts for special projects such as transport. Access to the outdoor areas and large play apparatus contributed effectively to children's health and physical development. The curriculum helped children to learn through practical experience, for instance in their art activities and in water and sand play. However, these activities were mostly too teacher directed and there was room for more individual creativity. At times, staff did not effectively develop the children's skills during activities through questioning or discussion. In science and mathematics, there were limited opportunities for investigative work such as measuring, comparing, exploring and investigating. There were insufficient opportunities for children to use information and communications technology (ICT) to support their learning.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Provision for health and safety was good. There were effective arrangements to ensure safety. School buses had seat-belts and children were well supervised going to and from buses. The building was clean and well-maintained and a washroom was provided with needed material. The full-time nurse provided a good-level of health-care. Children's medical reports were updated. Children's health and development were checked regularly by the nurse and the doctor. Healthy lifestyles had been promoted during several talks and activities arranged by the nurse. Signs for emergency exits and assembly points were clear and staff had been trained for evacuation, although children had not been included. All staff members were aware of child protection procedures although there was no written policy.

The quality of support was good overall. Teachers knew all of the children well and monitored children's social and personal well-being as well as their health. The school managed behaviour well. Parents received regular newsletters and detailed reports in Arabic and English. However, these did not set out what children needed to do next to advance their learning. The comprehensive academic daily tracking system helped to identify the few children who were consistently underperforming and provide them with support. Nevertheless, a considerable number of children who would benefit from further challenge were not identified and planned for. The school kept accurate records of attendance which were managed well. There had been a noticeable improvement in attendance over the past year.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was good. The senior leadership team worked in close partnership with the Police Liaison Officer. The kindergarten leaders were active learners about the new methods of teaching and acted as role models. Consequently, there was a spirit of collaboration among leadership and all other staff and the commitment to improve the school was shared by all adults. They monitored the work of the school, had instituted systems to provide continuing oversight of children's progress and knew most aspects of their school well. There were well-developed systems for performance management. However, these did not sufficiently analyse the aspects of teaching which impacted on learning.

The school's self-evaluation was acceptable. The leaders had responded actively to the recommendations of the previous inspection. Visits to other schools and professional advice had informed the development plans. Changes since the last inspection included consistent methods of planning lessons and assessing children's progress, review and broadening of the curriculum, and planned management of exploratory sessions of play, such as the introduction of the 'wet area'. Although development plans were based upon a sound analysis of the school's performance, they lacked specific measurable criteria by which their impact on children's learning could be assessed. There was therefore no clear way to assess the impact of development work upon children's attainment and progress.

The school's partnerships with parents and the community were good. Parents had noticed many positive developments in the quality, frequency and organisation of communication about their children's well-being and progress. They were pleased that the curriculum now included more sport and that trips enhanced the topics taught in the curriculum. They felt welcome in the school, appreciated the many opportunities to share their expertise and participate in their children's education. They felt assured that any concerns or suggestions would be taken seriously. The school inspired trust through its pro-active practice of contacting parents to share information or concerns and to seek parental opinions through questionnaires.

The governance of the school was good. The practical involvement of the Police Liaison Officer provided a constant and effective link to the police headquarters. She gave practical support in developing and implementing the action and strategic plans by facilitating networking opportunities with other schools, arranging training and explaining the school's needs to the Police Authority to whom the school was held rigorously accountable.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. The building had been renovated well. It was spacious, bright and an attractive environment for children. There were a number of specialised learning areas such as a gym, art room and cinema. Play equipment provided physical challenge and the 'wet area' provided children with a place to explore water through play. Teachers were qualified and committed to children's welfare and to school improvement, but lacked specific skills in best early years practice. Resources were acceptable but were not always deployed so that children could use them independently in ways that encouraged them to inquire and investigate and so further their problem-solving and thinking skills.

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
Attainment	Good
Progress over time	Good

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
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Good
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Acceptable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?	
Age group:	KG
Attainment	Good
Progress over time	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?	
Age group:	KG
Attainment	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?	
Age group:	KG
Attainment	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable

How good is the students' personal and social development?	
Age group:	KG
Attitudes and behaviour	Good
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Good

How good are teaching and learning?	
Age group:	KG
Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?	
Age group:	KG
Curriculum quality	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?	
Age group:	KG
Health and safety	Good
Quality of support	Good

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

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