

**Al Basateen Kindergarten  
Al Khawaneej  
Inspection Report  
Kindergarten**

Report published May 2010

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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.

Al Basateen Kindergarten was inspected in February 2010 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 children's progress in English, mathematics and science.

## Basic information about the school

Located in Al Khawaneej, Al Basateen Kindergarten is a private school providing education for boys and girls from KG 1 to 2, aged three to five years. The school's curriculum was based on that of the Ministry of Education. The Kindergarten was started by the Dubai Women's Association as a charitable trust to provide low cost, quality provision for the children of mothers who attend education classes or who work in the adult section which is located in the same premises as the Kindergarten. The Principal of the Kindergarten is also the Manager of the adult provision. At the time of the inspection, there were 109 children on roll. Attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Most parents appreciated what the Kindergarten offered and had almost no concerns. They particularly appreciated that their children liked school; that children were treated fairly; the good links with parents and that the school kept the children safe and healthy.

## How well does the school perform overall?

Al Basateen Kindergarten provided an acceptable standard of education with some good features. It had improved well since it was last inspected. This was because school leadership took the inspection report's recommendations very seriously and made effective steps to improve matters. As a result, the school had no unsatisfactory features and had increased the number of good ones. Children made acceptable progress and reached acceptable standards in Arabic, English, mathematics and science with scope for faster progress in KG2 in the latter two. It was keeping its promise to parents through its drive for continuing improvement. Parents regarded it well and were so pleased with what it offered that they requested and supported the school's ambition for a new school with a wider age range.

Children's attitudes to learning and behaviour had improved to good since the last inspection and this was one reason why they were making better progress. Other aspects of children's personal development were also good. They understood the needs of others, how to safeguard their environment and how to be responsible citizens. Another reason for children's progress was the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Previously, most aspects were unsatisfactory but they had advanced to acceptable, leaving scope for further improvement such as expecting more of the children, grouping them more effectively and encouraging enquiry and choice of activities. The teachers were assessing the children's progress competently and the school had made a good start in gathering and using this information to enable faster progress but this development was at an early stage. The curriculum was acceptable. The school had increased the number and range of local visits which helped the children understand the world around them as shown in their knowledge of modern Dubai. Having too few computers hampered children's progress in information technology skills. The school's health and safety arrangements were good and encouraged children to feel safe and learn and play without distractions. Staff carefully supported the children with well-supervised activities and gave clear guidance on acceptable behaviour and praise for their efforts.

The Principal led the school well and had guided and encouraged the staff to make the improvements needed. She understood the work was not complete and was continuing to set a clear direction for further change through the accurate choice of priorities in the school development plan. However, this lacked the means for the school to judge how its improvement actions were making a difference to children's progress. The quality of teaching was monitored regularly but did not clearly pick out the strengths and weaknesses. The school's links with parents and the community were good and contributed to the school's improvement, as did the good quality of governance. The school made best use of somewhat limited space and had enough staff and resources overall.

## Key features of the school

- The school had acted promptly on the previous report's recommendations and had improved;
- Leadership and management were now good and had improved children's progress in English and mathematics and in other aspects;
- Children's attitudes to school and behaviour were good and supported their learning well;
- Children had a good understanding of their social responsibilities and awareness of environmental matters;
- All aspects of teaching and learning had improved but areas for development remained;
- The school made good arrangements for children's health and safety;
- Most aspects of leadership and management were good but the development plan lacked a means of measuring its impact on children's learning and the monitoring of teaching quality was not clearly picking out strengths and areas to improve.

## Recommendations

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - raising expectations of what KG2 children can achieve in mathematics and science investigations;
  - enabling children to make more independent choices and work productively together in groups;
  - bringing together and using the information the school was gathering on children's progress;
  - monitoring teaching quality more effectively by clearly picking out strengths and weaknesses and using the information for staff development;
- Improve development planning by setting measurable ways of judging the impact of improvements in provision especially on children's achievement.

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

Attainment and progress in Arabic were acceptable. Almost all children in KG1 and KG2 demonstrated age appropriate skills in both speaking and listening. Almost all children could read the letters they learnt in class. They were making acceptable progress in reading and could, for example in KG 1, give examples in Arabic of animals name starting with certain letters. Most children in KG2 could trace letters in their workbook correctly.

Children reached acceptable levels of attainment in English and made acceptable progress. This was an improvement since the school was last inspected when progress was unsatisfactory. Attainment in listening and speaking was better than that in reading and writing. Children spoke clearly and confidently when reciting the alphabet, singing nursery rhymes or answering questions. They greeted one another and adults politely. They listened carefully to instructions or questions such as, "Who would like to come and trace over a letter?" and responded to them accurately. They recognised, named and sounded out most individual letters in the alphabet and some frequently used words. Most children copied individual letters or wrote over letter outlines. A minority wrote these letters free-hand.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were acceptable. Children performed to teachers' expectations, but a minority of children in KG2 were below the level expected in number work by international standards. Children in KG1 could say numbers to six, match the correct number of objects to numbers and formed numbers using play dough. In KG2, they could count objects to ten and were beginning to write the numbers independently. Children could recognise and name circles, squares and triangles in English and Arabic and sort by colour.

Attainment and progress in science were acceptable. Children knew the names of wild and domesticated animals and could classify them into groups, based on their features, using pictures. They knew a range of vocabulary about where these animals lived, their colour and what noises they made. They knew the features and characteristics of plants and what they need to grow. In KG2, children were beginning to use investigation skills. They learned about different materials used to make containers, what could be used in a freezer and how water changed when frozen. However, they were capable of faster progress in investigative work.

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

Children's attitudes and behaviour across the school were good. They were polite, friendly and respectful towards one another, both during lessons and at play when they mixed more freely. All children had good relationships with their teachers and school staff and trusted them. Children were curious about new adults they met but older ones did not lack confidence when speaking with them. Children came punctually for lessons during the day but were not as prompt in arriving for lessons at the start of the day. Their attendance was acceptable.

Children's spiritual and civic understanding was good. Most were aware of the various communities that make up Dubai society and had a good understanding of some local traditions and culture. Most children willingly helped their teachers organise lessons by removing papers from the board, cleaning their desks, and keeping their bags tidy. All of the children were proud to be Muslim with an understanding of some daily tasks required of Muslims.

Children's economic and environmental understanding was good. Most were aware of Dubai's main places of interest, particularly for young children. Most had some grasp of the value of money and buying and selling, for instance when they helped their parents in the monthly school produce-market. Most children wanted to help Dubai's development by selecting different careers. Many children were aware of the need to preserve the environment. For instance, they realised that leaving litter was wrong and were used to tidying up after themselves. From a wider perspective, they disapproved of how some adults littered beaches and left them unsafe.

## How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was acceptable. Teachers had an acceptable level of subject knowledge and used different teaching methods and some resources based on children learning through play. They made use of the classroom and other areas inside and outside school to help children learn. Teachers planned some activities which related to real life experiences. For instance, children learned about fruit and vegetables when they set up their own market and sold produce to parents, and they visited the zoo and a farm to learn about animals. Lessons were initially led by the teachers who explained things clearly but this was too repetitious for a small minority of children who could have started other tasks more quickly. There was little teaching of children in groups because teachers worked with children individually.

The quality of learning was acceptable but not all children were challenged to do as well as they could, especially in science investigations and mathematics. Some who finished early had to wait for the rest rather than having more challenging work to do. This was not usually the case in the teaching of Arabic and English, where tasks were set at different levels of ability. Teachers were beginning to use a range of resources for teaching but there was a shortage of resources in all classrooms. As a result, children had limited opportunities for exploring ideas practically or for working with others. Nevertheless, teaching in Arabic made imaginative use of puppets to hold children's attention. The teaching of English was well supported by the

teaching assistant who reinforced the main points made by the teacher. Children's work was celebrated and displayed attractively in most classrooms and about the school. Teachers, and sometimes children, used the displays to support learning. For instance, teachers referred to animal pictures, letters and numbers to reinforce learning points and children used the displays of animals for counting.

The quality of assessment was acceptable. Teachers planned their lessons together but only a minority noted what children would learn. Others simply stated the activities children should complete. This meant that sometimes, teachers assessed what children had or had not completed, rather than evaluating how well they had done or what difficulties they had faced. Teachers used praise and encouragement appropriately and several played quiet background music when children were completing set tasks. This resulted in a calm working atmosphere in the classrooms.

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

The curriculum was acceptable and based on the Ministry of Education model. It was broad, balanced and contributed to the development of children's personal, social, physical and academic skills and religious awareness. It was reviewed by the teachers who suggested improvements to the Principal. There was improved continuity in most subjects so that teachers in KG2 knew what children had covered before. The curriculum widened children's horizons through educational trips such as visits to a farm and a zoo; taking part in local physical education events and going to the community health centre to learn about dental hygiene and healthy diets. Children were involved in municipal projects such as 'Tree Day' and 'Clean the World' and visited places of interest in Dubai such as the airport. The children took part in cultural events such as National Day and in some charity work when food was brought in and shared. These benefited children's personal and social skills, their appreciation of their heritage and care for others. Teachers developed skills across the curriculum using art activities and music to reinforce learning. For instance, children sang songs and rhymes in English and Arabic and decorated Arabic or English letters. Access to the outdoor areas and large apparatus contributed to children's health and physical development. The curriculum helped children to learn through practical experience, for instance in their craft activities. These were mostly teacher directed and there was room for more individual creativity and thinking for themselves. In science and mathematics, there were limited opportunities for investigative work such as measuring and comparing.

## How well does the school protect and support students?

Provision for the health and safety of the children was good. Overall, the building was clean and well maintained, toilets were clean and hygienic. The full time nurse provided a good level of health care to all children. All records about the children's medical histories were kept up to date. Medications were kept securely and a doctor visited regularly for medical checkups. The nurse completed individual health reviews on entry to school. The school promoted healthy lifestyles through regular physical exercise, diets and personal hygiene. The nurse kept a record of accidents and any follow up. Supervision of the children around the school was good; two permanent security guards monitored safety. The school held regular fire and evacuation drills. At the end of the school day, children were carefully supervised as they left the school site.

The quality of support overall was acceptable. Adult-child relationships in class and around the school were positive. Any behaviour issues were handled appropriately in class, and by senior management when necessary. Regular attendance was promoted through effective systems. Teachers knew their children well and had a reasonable idea of their personal and academic progress. To improve this further, the school had just introduced a system of tracking and recording individual children's overall progress, but it was too early to judge its impact because the data had not yet been collected centrally and used analytically to evaluate how well the children are achieving.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management was good and had improved. The Principal's leadership had enabled the staff team to make good progress on the previous inspection's recommendations. She had made the most of individual staff strengths by arranging training, based on staff appraisal and had led a determined effort on school improvement. This had given the school a clear direction to enhance provision and improve children's progress. This drive for improvement was also clear in the ambition for a new building and widened age range. Teachers and the management enjoyed productive relationships, shared values and a determination to continue to improve.

Although improved, school self-evaluation and development planning remained acceptable. The school's development plan marked the start of work on the previous report's recommendations and most targets had been reached. These were the right priorities, but the plan had some limitations. Chiefly, it did not contain ways of enabling the school to judge the impact of improvements on the children's progress. The monitoring of teaching quality did not give a clear enough view of strengths and weaknesses.

The school's links with parents and the community were good and were rooted in its original reason for opening. Through listening to views and explaining what the school could do for the children, the Principal had overcome the reluctance of this former rural community in sending young girls to school. Parents responded positively to the KG's guidance on helping their children at home. They were well supported in this through daily messages home and

suggestions for working together. There were good links with local businesses which sponsored the school's activities and hosted visits such as those to farms.

The quality of governance was good. Governance was through the Board of the Dubai Women's Association who devoted part of their time to maintaining good oversight of the school's strategic direction through regular meetings with the Principal. They approved finance and sought fresh sponsorship. They visited the school, had approved the school's action plan and were pleased with what the school had achieved with relatively limited resources.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. Careful budgeting had secured gradual improvement such as the planned shading to allow year round use of an outside play space but the school lacked sufficient computers. Although teachers were increasingly making learning materials for the children, there were too few resources to encourage more choice and learning through enquiry. There were sufficient staff to cope with the number of children although class sizes were quite high at around 24. The school had sufficient space for the children to be taught in classrooms or specialist rooms and to exercise outside on a rota basis.

## 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 Arabic?	
Age group:	KG
Attainment	Acceptable
Progress over time	Acceptable

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

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	Acceptable

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
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](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae).

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