

The Philippine School Inspection Report

Kindergarten to High

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.

The Philippine School was inspected in October 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 students' progress in Islamic Education (for Muslim students), Arabic, English, mathematics and science.

Basic information about the school

Located in Al Rashidiya, The Philippines School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to high school aged three to 15 years. The school follows the Philippine Revised Basic Education Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 1287 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was outstanding.

As part of the inspection process, Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents were overall, pleased with their children's progress in English, mathematics and science. A significant minority stated that they felt their children's progress in Islamic Education and Arabic was poor. Over three quarters of the parents stated that teaching was good or better. They also felt that their children enjoyed the lessons in the school and that the extra-curricular opportunities were good. Most parents agreed that behaviour in the school was good and resources and facilities were judged to be satisfactory or better by almost all parents. Almost all parents felt that their child was treated fairly at school and felt that the school dealt well with incidents of bullying. Most parents were pleased with the amount and timing of information they received from the school. They believed that the school responded appropriately to parent concerns. Almost all felt that their children received the right amount of homework. Most felt that the school reports provided helpful information. Just over half of the parents thought that they were sufficiently engaged in the life of the school.

How well does the school perform overall?

The Philippine School provided an acceptable quality of education. Students' attainment overall was good as is their progress through the school. The school met its mission goals and mission statement by preparing the students for further education on college courses in the Philippines. The senior management and staff have been very effective since the foundation of the school three years ago. During this time they have moved to larger premises with minimum disruption to the students. This is the first time the school had been inspected. There was a caring and motivating learning environment with excellent relationships between teachers and students in the school's community. Students were keen to learn. Good support was evident within the school and from the parents too. The quality of teaching quality was variable. A few outstanding lessons were seen in mathematics, science and English but overall teaching for effective learning was acceptable.

Although the curriculum in primary and high school phases was acceptable, there was insufficient monitoring of the curriculum. Attainment in Arabic was unsatisfactory and students' knowledge and understanding of Islam, life in Dubai and the environment required improvement. The behaviour of the students was outstanding. They were proud of their heritage. There were many indications that the leadership and staff, along with the whole school community, demonstrated the capacity and tenacity to further improve the school.

Key features of the school

- A caring and motivating learning environment with excellent relationships between teachers and students and all in the school's community;
- The school was full of confident learners who were proud of their identity, worked hard and were keen to learn;
- Good support was available for every student, consistent with the schools mission statement;
- The school provided a safe and healthy environment for students;
- The school enjoyed excellent support from the parents;
- The school provided a Philippine education which allowed continuity with life in the homeland.

Recommendations

- Develop more effective, regular and systematic processes to review the curriculum and ensure that activities meet the learning needs of all students;
- Raise students' attainment in Arabic;
- Improve the students' knowledge and understanding of Islam, Dubai, the economy and the environment;
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so they are consistently good across the school;
- Develop the management structure to better facilitate communication and to enable innovation and change;

- Identify students with special educational needs and plan tailored support for them so they can make better progress.

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

Attainment and progress in Islamic Education were acceptable in primary and secondary stages. Students were able to read and recite short verses of The Holy Qur'an and developed acceptable knowledge about Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and aspects of his life. Primary school students developed knowledge about the five daily prayers. In secondary, students had an age-appropriate understanding of the five pillars of Islam. However, in both stages, students' skills in reciting and pronunciation of The Holy Qur'an were weak. Across all grades, students showed age-appropriate understanding of Islamic code of conduct, which was embedded in their behaviour, in classes and in school.

Progress and attainment in Arabic as an additional language in primary and secondary stages were unsatisfactory. Students in both stages had under-developed basic skills. Students were not able to converse in Arabic, and they were not able to follow their teachers' directions unless instructions were given to them in English. Across all grades students were still struggling with reading individual letters and short words. Their writing skills were limited to copying letters. Students in all grades were not able to understand short stories or poetry and had very limited knowledge about grammar.

Attainment and progress in Filipino were good across all phases of the school. Most students demonstrated good skills across all four areas of learning. Their skills in speaking and listening were promoted effectively through regular opportunities in classes and in whole events, such as assemblies. In reading and in writing, students' skills developed well as they progressed through the school though staff did not provide a sufficient range of meaningful contexts for personal writing.

Attainment and progress in English were good across the school. Listening, speaking, and reading skills were strengths in all phases. Students' knowledge of vocabulary and grammar was usually well above age-related expectations. In the Kindergarten, children built sight word vocabularies rapidly and knew the alphabet and the words for numbers 1 to 100. Primary students wrote autobiographies and book reviews and could use foreign verbs in context. Secondary students wrote sonnets, business letters and fiction. They also studied literature and Japanese poetry and performed dramatic skits to learn about Greek drama. Students' writing was mostly derivative of other sources in all phases of the school. Progress in writing original prose was evident but limited, particularly in the primary grades.

In mathematics, Kindergarten children showed good attainment and progress over time. In the primary grades, students' attainment and progress were acceptable while the secondary school students showed good attainment and acceptable progress over time. The Kindergarten children demonstrated age-appropriate numeracy skills. At the end of the primary stage,

students demonstrated age-appropriate skills across all aspects of mathematics including number, calculation, measurement and data handling. Students at Grade 10 were able to apply problem-solving strategies using representations and models.

In science, attainment and progress was acceptable in the Kindergarten and good throughout the primary and secondary phases. At the end of Grade 10 the students' attainment was above that which can be expected internationally. Many of the students understood Newton's Laws. Using this knowledge they worked well in groups to apply their understanding. For example, one group designed a landing device to protect an egg from damage when dropped from a second floor balcony onto concrete. At the end of the primary phase students' knowledge and understanding was also advanced. For example, they could explain how the urinary system excretes waste from the body and most could recall the name and functions of the vital organs that are involved.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour around the school were outstanding. Students were, at all times, friendly, co-operative and responsible in their relationships with each other and their teachers. Attendance and punctuality were outstanding. Students made good choices in personal health and fitness, eating nutritious foods in the canteen and in the Kindergarten. All students reported that they felt safe at the school and stated that there was no bullying. Most students participated in lessons with confidence and were capable of making articulate presentations to their classmates.

Students' civic understanding of Islam and their appreciation of local traditions and culture were acceptable across the school. They demonstrated tolerance towards other cultures while at the same time embracing their Philippine heritage. Most students could sing the UAE national anthem in Arabic and the Philippine anthem in Filipino. Students took on roles of responsibility in the school, including daily marshalling of younger students by older ones to and from the buses and morning assemblies.

Students' economic and environmental understanding was acceptable Kindergarten and primary but unsatisfactory in the secondary years. All students took care of their immediate surroundings by putting litter in its place and refraining from graffiti and vandalism. A few students planned to participate in a 'Clean Up' day to help enhance the cleanliness of the local community. Only a few students demonstrated age-appropriate economic and environment understanding when broad questions on these topics were asked of them. Knowledge of these issues was particularly limited among the older students.

How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the primary and secondary grades. Although examples of good and outstanding lessons were observed, on balance these were a minority. Most teachers planned their lessons carefully but fewer were able to deliver lessons that fully achieved their objectives. In the best lessons teachers used

resources and time effectively to keep all students engaged almost all of the time. Such lessons also featured dialogue with students that encouraged them to think for themselves rather than repeat memorised facts. Although many teachers employed group work strategies, the groups formed were frequently too large to involve all students in a meaningful manner. Teachers' use of time varied in efficacy; tasks assigned to students were often given as competitions to finish first rather than learning experiences to fully absorb. Overall, teaching met the needs of most students in both primary and secondary grades, with the exception of Arabic lessons, where it was consistently weak.

The quality of learning was good in the Kindergarten and acceptable in the rest of the school. Almost all students were co-operative in lessons but levels of engagement varied. Students interacted well with one another to collaborate on tasks in a variety of subjects. However, students were almost always dependent upon their teachers to guide their learning; few students' demonstrated independent research and inquiry skills. Students made connections between new and previous learning and also made connections across different subjects and with their daily lives. Critical and higher-order thinking skills were developed in only a few lessons. The most able students were often not challenged to learn at their full capacity.

At the Kindergarten stage, assessment was good and, at primary and secondary stages, assessment arrangements were acceptable. Staff used portfolios of evidence to inform other teachers, parents and the students themselves regarding progress and achievement. There was a breadth of attainment data generated but this was not used effectively by teachers to revise the curriculum or lessons. Staff in the English team reviewed data effectively to help improve teaching quality.

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

The Kindergarten curriculum was of a good quality in terms of meeting the needs of the students. The primary and secondary curricula were acceptable in terms of the breadth and depth, with the major exception of Arabic. Assessments were done with quarterly test periods. Feedback to parents on the results of assessment was timely. The implementation of a Philippine-based curriculum in Dubai, using English as a medium of instruction covered the whole range of subjects required in the Philippines plus the required Islamic Education for Muslim students, Arabic and the additional subjects of information and communications technology (ICT) and research and statistics in the secondary level. The recognition of the curriculum used by the school by the Philippine authorities made it easier for the transition of students from Dubai to schools back to the home country. The school offered a wide range of extra-curricular activities and students' participation in Filipino-organised community events was a further positive feature. The more popular activities were the drum, lyre and twirlers corps where there was an excess of interested applicants; the journalism club, dance group and the sports groups were equally popular.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety provisions were of good quality across the school. The building was a clean, safe place for learning and it was secure at all times. The school clinic provided high-quality care, including medical examinations of all students, tracking of overall fitness, dispensing of medicines, and provision for students with special medical conditions. The nurse educated students about healthy choices and monitored the canteen every day to ensure that nutritious food was available. Students were well supervised at all times. Students reported that they felt safe on buses; the management of buses ensured safe transport, arrivals and departures each day. However, private vehicles using the front parking area moved in all directions and frequently in reverse, creating a safety hazard for students and adults walking in and out of the school.

Support of students was good across the school. Leaders, teachers and support staff members worked together to provide an environment of genuine care and commitment to students' success. All students had a daily advisory period during which they received individual attention to their academic and personal development. Daily logs were kept by all advisors, which were controlled by the guidance counsellor. The rare incidents of poor behaviour were well-managed, tracked, and reported upon, with good follow-up to parents. Personal counselling was available to all students, and career guidance was provided to older students as they neared graduation. Attendance and punctuality were very well managed. Support for students with special educational needs was provided but it was an area for further development by the school.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership in the school was acceptable. The owner and the Principal knew their students and staff very well and good relationships were evident. These effective relationships enabled the school to maintain an open and friendly environment characterised by respect and courtesy. The leadership structure in the school was clear and roles and responsibilities were well established. However, subject leaders and other responsibility post-holders did not hold organised, regular meetings where they could evaluate their work, share ideas, plan ahead, report back and make changes, where necessary.

Self-evaluation arrangements were acceptable and developing. Senior staff in the school sought the views of parents and this informed actions and decision-making. Subject leaders, however, were not sufficiently involved in self-review. Although a regular programme of lesson observations was in place, this had not yet been successful in raising the quality of teaching and learning.

Links with parents were good and were consistent with the school's commitment to ensure that provision was characterised by excellent care and support. Almost all of the parents agreed that the school was well led. Communication was regular and helpful. Parents stated

that they enjoyed good communication with their children's' teachers. Links with the wider community were under developed.

The governance of the school was unsatisfactory because no formal governance structure was in place. The school owner and school leaders lacked a critical friend to hold the school to account. There were no evident plans available to indicate planned development in this regard.

The use of staffing, facilities, and resources at the school, were acceptable. There were a few classes which were overcrowded. This adversely affected the quality of students' learning. The furniture for those in Grade 1 was found to be too big and the library was still in its development. However, the school staff were appropriately skilled and qualified for their various roles and responsibilities.

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	Primary	High
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
0% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.			
Age group:	KG	Primary	High
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at www.khda.gov.ae.

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