

Inspection Report



Dubai English Speaking School

2014-2015



إكسبو 2020
دبي، الإمارات العربية المتحدة
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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School information



General information

Location	Umm Hurair
Type of school	Private
Opening year of school	1963
Website	www.dessdubai.com
Telephone	04-337-1457
Address	P.O. Box 2002, Oud Metha
Principal	Mrs Catherine Davy
Language of instruction	English
Inspection dates	10 th –12 th November 2014



Students

Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age range	3 - 11
Grades or year groups	Foundation Stage 1 - Year 6
Number of students on roll	964
Number of children in FS1	87
Number of Emirati students	7
Number of students with SEN	129
Largest nationality group of students	UK



Teachers / Support staff

Number of teachers	69
Largest nationality group of teachers	UK
Number of teacher assistants	35
Teacher-student ratio	FS1-1:9; FS2 to Year 2 - 1:13; Years 3-6 - 1:18
Number of guidance counsellors	1
Teacher turnover	18%



Curriculum

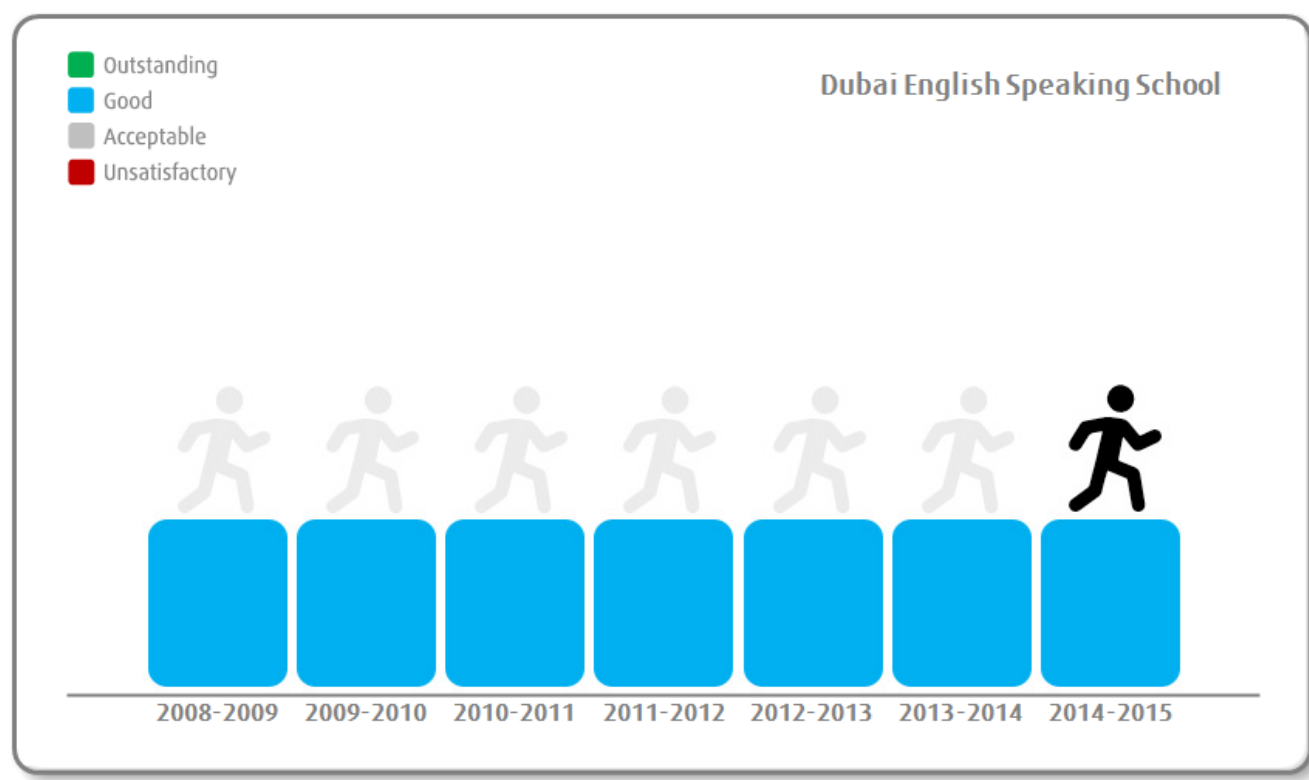
Educational Permit	UK
Main Curriculum / Other	UK
Standardised tests / board exams	SAT/ CEM
Accreditation	BSME



Dear Parents,

Dubai English Speaking School was inspected by DSIB from 10th – 12th November 2014, and the overall quality of education provided by the school was found to be **Good**

In order to judge the overall quality of education provided by the school, inspectors considered six key aspects of the school's performance and standards. Inspectors looked at children's attainment and progress in five key subjects, their learning skills as well as their personal and social development. They judged how effective teaching was across the school. Inspectors considered how well the school's curriculum, including activities inside and outside the classroom, met the educational needs of all children. They judged how well the school protected and supported children. In addition inspectors judged the effectiveness of leadership and governance, including management, staffing, facilities and resources.



The inspection judgements were drawn from a range of evidence gathered by the inspection team, including observing children learning in lessons, looking at their work, talking with children, meetings with staff, parents and governors, and reviewing the parents' and teachers' surveys.

The key strengths and areas for improvement to be made by the school leaders and governors are:

Strengths

- The new Head Teacher and the new Principal had made a good start at improving the school.
- Children in the Foundation Stage, and primary students, performed well in English and mathematics.
- Students' learning skills were developed effectively through a well-planned curriculum.
- Students had excellent personal and social skills, and the school provided them with very good support.
- The school had excellent facilities, and these had recently been upgraded.

Areas for improvement

- Improve students' progress in learning Arabic and Islamic Education.
- Improve the homework policy and practices.
- Review the school's governance by considering the important roles parents can play.
- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation is accurate and consistent so that leaders can better plan the necessary school improvements.

We warmly encourage you to read the full school inspection report.

The school is required to submit to DSIB an action plan identifying the steps they will take to address the areas for improvement. We have advised your school leaders to share this with you.

We trust that the information provided will help you understand, and encourages you to support, your child's school.

Yours sincerely,

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

A closer look at Dubai English Speaking School



How well does the school perform overall?

Overall, Dubai English Speaking School provided a 'Good' quality of education for its students.

- In the Foundation Stage, children's attainment and progress in learning English, mathematics and science were outstanding. Across the primary phase, students demonstrated outstanding attainment and progress in English and mathematics, and good attainment and progress in science. Primary students' progress in Islamic Education had improved since the last inspection, but their attainment and progress in learning Arabic as an additional language were unsatisfactory. Students demonstrated very effective learning skills. They were keen to collaborate, could make connections between their learning in different subjects, and responded well to opportunities to think critically.
- Across the school, students had an excellent work ethic, were well behaved and respected each other. They had many opportunities to develop their personal and social skills. Students showed very good understanding of Islamic values, the heritage and culture of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and an awareness of other global cultures. They contributed to the life of the school and the wider community and were dedicated to preserving the environment and conserving its resources.
- Teaching in most subjects and classes met students' needs well. Foundation stage teaching was highly effective and most primary lessons were relaxed and enjoyable, yet very productive. Through effective assessments, including observations and detailed marking, teachers knew their students' needs well enough to plan appropriately challenging learning activities. Students knew for themselves what they needed to do to improve.
- Students enjoyed a rich and exciting curriculum, including dance, information and communication technology, music, French, design technology, swimming and physical education. These subjects were enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- A strong culture of protecting and supporting students, including those with special educational needs, ensured that students enjoyed school and felt safe and valued.
- The newly appointed Principal and Head Teacher had made a good start in moving the school forward. They were well supported by the Board of Governors, other senior leaders, middle managers and a well-qualified and able team of teachers and assistants. The school's facilities had recently been enhanced by a new training pool, dance studio and excellent Foundation Stage 1 extension.

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?



- Students with special educational needs made good academic progress and often made outstanding progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They developed confidence and resilience when tackling challenging work.
- The school quickly identified students who needed extra support. Specialist support teachers were skilled in planning activities to help students work on their learning targets, but not all teachers were able to adapt their lessons to help students in their next steps in learning.
- The special educational needs staff was highly qualified and experienced and was successful in supporting students with a wide range of difficulties. The school kept parents well informed about their children's progress, and the staff gave valuable guidance to families on how to support their children at home. The staff also helped parents develop useful links with external professionals.

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

		Foundation Stage	Primary
 Islamic Education	Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Good 
 Arabic as a First Language	Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
	Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable
 Arabic as an Additional Language	Attainment	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory
	Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory 
 English	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
 Mathematics	Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding
	Progress	Outstanding	Outstanding
 Science	Attainment	Outstanding	Good 
	Progress	Outstanding	Good
		Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills		Outstanding	Outstanding 

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Outstanding
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding 

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Good

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Outstanding	Good

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding 

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	All phases
The effectiveness of leadership	Good 
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding



School **Inspection** Report

Overall school judgement

Good

Key strengths

- The new senior leaders shared a determination to further develop the work of the school.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage was outstanding, and there was sustained high performance found in children's learning in English and mathematics across the school.
- Strong learning skills were developed by students through an exciting curriculum.
- The personal and social skills of students were outstanding throughout the school, underpinned by the high quality of support the school provided to them.
- The school had excellent, recently enhanced facilities, high quality resources and very effective procedures for managing the staff.

Changes since the last inspection

- Students' progress had improved in Islamic Education.
- Students' community and environmental responsibility in the primary years had improved.
- The quality of students' learning skills had improved in the primary years.
- The internal communications had improved and were more coherent.
- Senior leaders engaged more regularly with parents.

Recommendations

- Take forward plans to review the homework policy, so as to enable parents to support their children's learning more effectively.
- Strengthen the governance of the school by ensuring that more parents have their voices heard.
- Ensure that self-evaluation procedures produce consistently reliable judgements upon which to base plans for improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors should closely monitor the teaching of Islamic Education and Arabic to ensure that the learning outcomes for students are as good as in the other subjects.

 Improved from last inspection

 Declined from last inspection

1. How good are the students' attainment, progress and learning skills?

Foundation Stage		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as a First Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Outstanding	Outstanding

- Most children made outstanding progress in developing all elements of their English skills. Through carefully selected experiences, they extended their vocabularies, developed their confidence to speak, and built their early phonic, reading and writing skills.
- In mathematics, children made outstanding progress in understanding the concept of number and one to one correspondence. They could compare objects of different sizes and could identify and name two dimensional shapes. Most children acquired the appropriate language and vocabulary to explain their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- In science, the children showed great interest and enthusiasm for investigation and talked with confidence about what they found out and why things happened.

Primary		
Subjects	Attainment	Progress
Islamic Education	Acceptable	Good 
Arabic as a First Language	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic as an Additional Language	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory 
English	Outstanding	Outstanding
Mathematics	Outstanding	Outstanding
Science	Good 	Good

- In Islamic Education, most students demonstrated levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that were in line with expectations. They understood key principles of faith and worship in Islam, and were able to recite and memorise a number of short Surahs. Their memorisation and recitation skills were developing rapidly and links with other areas of learning had been established.
- In learning Arabic as a first language, most students were developing their listening and responding skills and their knowledge of Arabic grammar. However, they did not progress well in developing their creative, extended writing and speaking skills.
- In learning Arabic as an additional language, students could listen to basic instructions, but were unable to listen for comprehension purposes. They were not developing their speaking skills, which were confined to the use of simple vocabulary and short phrases. They did not progress in creative and extended writing, which was mostly limited to words and short phrases.

- In English, by Year 6 most students demonstrated strong skills writing for a variety of purposes. They read with accuracy and fluency and made articulate contributions to small group and whole class discussions.
- In mathematics, most students in the primary years used their well-developed mental agility and quick recall of number facts to solve challenging and complex real life problems. They were able to explain and justify their answers using appropriate mathematical language.
- The strong features of students' attainment in science throughout the primary years were their scientific thinking, enquiry and investigation skills. Older students in particular were very effective in communicating their ideas and applying science to technology and the environment. However, the younger students' abilities to predict events and draw conclusions were less developed.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Learning skills	Outstanding	Outstanding 
• In both phases, students were highly engaged in their learning, and demonstrated concentration and resilience in their approach to work. Foundation stage children were regularly engaged in self-initiated learning activities. • In most lessons, students used their learning skills to collaborate and share their ideas in pairs or groups. They were able to discuss and debate issues in a mature manner. • Through the thematic approach to much of the curriculum, primary students in particular could make connections between their knowledge in different subjects and apply new learning to real life contexts. • Students made appropriate and frequent use of information technologies to support their research activities and the presentation of their work. The use of challenging and thought provoking questions enabled most students to show that they could think critically when addressing problems.		

2. How good is the students' personal and social development?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Personal responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding
• Students demonstrated mature conduct and attitudes. They were attentive and keen to learn. Across the school, many opportunities were given for students to take responsibility and to demonstrate leadership, for example, as prefects, student councillors or bus monitors. • Students' behaviour was of outstanding quality across the school. They were self-disciplined as they moved around school, during activities and when they worked in groups. • Students were very respectful of others. Relationships between teachers and students and between students and their peers were warm, considerate and purposeful. • Students had an excellent understanding of healthy living. The importance of good nutrition and personal fitness was promoted in a variety of ways. • The overall rate of attendance was good, and students arrived punctually to school and to lessons.		

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Outstanding
- Students had very good understanding of Islamic values and how these values influence the everyday lives of people in Dubai. - Emirati traditions and cultural heritage were known and understood by students, who appreciated their value to the people of the UAE. - Students fully appreciated their own cultures and were aware of cultural diversity around the world.		

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Community and environmental responsibility	Outstanding	Outstanding 
- Students showed deep understanding of their responsibilities as members of the community. This was exemplified by their dedication to preserving the environment and conserving its resources. - Students were proactive and thought critically about issues related to their learning and school life. - The students' environmental awareness was very good. They could clearly pinpoint the issues relating to pollution and to the importance of energy conservation, but found it difficult to elaborate on environmental changes and were not articulate about how to solve these problems.		

3. How good are teaching and assessment?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Good
- In the Foundation stage, teachers and the support staff had strong understanding of how young children learn and prepared an excellent range of learning experiences for them. Most primary teachers demonstrated strong knowledge of their subjects and how to make their lessons interesting to students. - In both phases, most teachers planned effective and varied lessons, which captured students' imaginations and ensured that they remained engaged in learning. - Most lessons had a brisk pace and provided opportunities for students to interact purposefully with each other and their teachers. - In both phases, most lessons featured appropriate levels of challenge and good support for all groups of students. - Teachers' questions were often challenging and required students to reflect and think critically. Students were given many opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. - Teachers of Arabic as a first language often expected too little from their students, who produced limited written work. Tasks were sometimes unimaginative and drawn mainly from text books. The pace of learning was slower than in other subjects.		

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Assessment	Outstanding	Good

- In the Foundation Stage classes, teachers knew their children very well. They provided tasks and learning experiences on the basis of what needed to be learned next, and children took part in assessing their own achievements using a very efficient system.
- Internal assessments were regular and robustly moderated, to provide students and teachers with a clear picture of the overall progress being made. External assessments were used in the foundation and lower primary years to check overall progress and predict the students' future attainment.
- Teachers analysed assessment data carefully and used the outcomes well to raise students' attainment and plan work that met the needs of all ability groups.
- International assessments of a representative sample of Year 5 students were analysed and used to make adjustments in curriculum and resources in order to improve the academic results in 2015.
- Teachers supported students well and frequently involved them in assessing their own and their peers' learning. Students' awareness of their own learning needs was enhanced by the setting of carefully agreed personal goals for improvement.

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

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Outstanding

- The rationale for the curriculum was founded on clear principles to promote the vision of an English school in Dubai. Priority was given to students' personal, social and emotional development.
- Curriculum planning followed a thematic approach and entailed real life activities and problem-solving so that students understood that learning is interconnected and purposeful. Planning in teams ensured the continuity, progression and consistency of the curriculum in most subjects and between the phases. Students were very well prepared for their next stages of education.
- A variety of additional subjects offered students very good opportunities to develop their skills, talents and interests beyond the core subjects. Visits, visitors and celebrations of special events enhanced students' learning experiences.
- Teachers made good use of cross-curricular links to enhance students' learning experiences.
- Curriculum review was firmly rooted in self-evaluation and action research. Recent innovations included enquiry-based learning and critical thinking, enabling students to have greater ownership of their learning.
- The curriculum in Arabic as a first language relied mainly on the Ministry of Education textbooks. Enrichment with additional materials was scarce, resulting in students' attainment only being in line with the National Standards Documents.

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Outstanding	Good
- In the Foundation Stage, the learning activities provided were constantly and effectively adapted for the varying interests, learning styles and abilities of the children. - In the primary years, effective adaptations to lessons were made to help most students meet their learning goals. They were particularly successful when activities were planned and taught by learning support specialists. However, not all teachers were skilled in modifying their lessons to help students take their next steps in learning. Scheduling conflicts limited the curriculum provision to some students. - The school offered a very wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities which significantly enhanced students' academic and personal development. There were productive links with other schools. - The school offered a 60 minute session once a week to teach Arabic as a first language to the small number of Arab children in the Foundation Stage.		

5. How well does the school protect and support students?

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding
- The school provided a safe and well supervised environment for its students. Child protection and anti-bullying policies were well understood and managed effectively. - Bus transport was very well organised and highly effective. The school nurses and medical doctor provided students with very good care. Emergency evacuation drills were regular, efficient and carefully recorded. - The campus was accessible by all, kept very clean and the buildings were well maintained. - The promotion of healthy living was supported by excellent systems to monitor students' health and diets. There was instruction provided to enable students to take increasing responsibility for their own healthy lifestyles. The school offered a wide variety of sporting options, which promoted personal fitness.		

	Foundation Stage	Primary
Quality of support	Outstanding	Outstanding 
- The ethos of mutual respect was evident throughout the school and relationships between the staff and students were very strong. There were effective systems in place for managing behaviour and members of the school made valuable contributions when reviewing them. - The school had successfully improved attendance and promoted the importance of punctuality amongst students and their parents. Rigorous systems were in place to swiftly follow up on any unexplained absences or frequent lateness. - The school welcomed students with a range of special educational needs. There were very good procedures in place to identify students' emerging needs.		

- Staff members were very aware of students' needs and difficulties. Students were able to receive valuable support and guidance from trusted members of the staff if they had concerns about their personal lives, academic progress or other issues.
- All students were well supported by their teachers and could readily access school's medical staff and the counsellor when required.

How well does the school provide for students with special educational needs?

	Overall
The overall effectiveness of provision for students with special educational needs	Good
• Senior leaders successfully ensured that an inclusive ethos was at the heart of the school's work. The special educational needs staff was highly qualified and experienced. It was successful in supporting students with a wide range of difficulties. However, the cycle of monitoring and evaluation of special educational needs provision, particularly in regular classrooms, was not synchronised with whole school monitoring and evaluation. • The school made good use of teacher observations, assessment data and concerns from parents to quickly identify, classify and help students who need additional support. • Highly effective modifications and support by the specialist staff resulted in rapid progress in the academic, personal, social and emotional development of these students. Whilst there was some excellent modification of activities by a minority of teachers, there were some inconsistencies in the planning of lessons. • The school kept parents well informed about their children's progress, and the staff gave valuable support and guidance to families on how to support their children at home. The staff also helped parents develop useful links with external professionals. Parents of students with special educational needs were generally pleased with the quality of information provided, but the school recognised the need to develop this further. • Students with special educational needs generally made good academic progress and often made outstanding progress in their social, personal and emotional development. They developed confidence and resilience when tackling challenging work. However, the school did not track or fully celebrate the progress students made in their personal, social and emotional development.	

6. How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Overall
The effectiveness of leadership	Good 
- The recently appointed Head Teacher and Principal had injected new vision and direction to the work of the school, although it had yet to be fully embedded. - There was a commitment to leadership being more widely distributed and a revised management structure. - Relationships amongst staff members were strong and recent moves to improve internal communications had proven to be successful. - The new senior leadership team, ably supported by middle managers, demonstrated their determination to improve the school. - It was still too early to judge the results of improvements over the longer term, but the early signs held much promise for the future.	

	Overall
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
- In evaluating the work of the school, staff members' quality judgements were inconsistently made regarding several important aspects of the school's work. - The new senior leadership team and middle managers monitored classroom practices and were encouraging individual teachers to become more reflective practitioners. - Steps were being taken to increasingly link teachers' professional development activities to the priorities in the school's development plan and to share best practices. - Progress had been made in addressing most of the recommendations in the last inspection report, but their full implementation required better outcomes by students learning Arabic as an additional language and greater consistency in the accuracy of self-evaluation judgements.	

	Overall
Parents and the community	Outstanding
- The new Head Teacher had already improved opportunities for parents to engage regularly with senior leaders and teachers through a regular Parents' Forum. - A newly appointed Communications and Marketing Manager was redesigning the school's website and developing ways for parents to engage easily with the school through technologies such as social media. - A home and school daily diary, well attended parent-teacher meetings and student progress reports provided parents with useful information. The school's homework policy required review to enable parents to support their children's learning more effectively. - The school had established some purposeful learning opportunities with other local schools.	

	Overall
Governance	Good
- The Board of Governors provided the school with strong support, exemplified by the recent improvements to the facilities. The Board had recognised the need to inject new leadership into the school and had appointed strong and able leaders with the capacity to take the school forward. The Board provided very good financing to equip the school with the necessary resources. Governors were committed to providing the best possible education for the students. - Governors held the school's leaders to account at its regular meetings with them, but it needed to ensure that all of the key aspects requiring improvement were fully addressed. - Whilst the Board engaged with parents, there was no elected Parent Governor on the Board or the Education Sub-Committee.	

	Overall
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Outstanding
- The day-to-day and operational management of the school was very efficient and effective. - Teachers were sufficient in number and suitably qualified, deployed effectively and ably supported by teaching assistants. All teachers and teaching assistants had access to a good range of professional development opportunities. Staff members who were new to the school engaged in an effective induction course. - The learning environment was very good and excellent new facilities for Foundation Stage 1 classes, dancing and a training pool had enhanced it further. Most teachers created stimulating learning environments through good displays of students' work. - Resources were very good overall. They promoted effective teaching and learning by including computer technologies, sporting equipment and library facilities.	

What are the views of the Principal, parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of the Principal, parents, and teachers were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form inspection 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	265	37%
	Last year	256	39%
 Teachers	40		54%
 Students	There are no secondary students in the school		

- A significant minority of parents and a majority of teachers responded to their surveys.
- Responses to the surveys indicated high levels of satisfaction in almost all aspects of the work of the school. However, parents were considerably less positive in their views about the progress their children were making learning Arabic as an additional language.
- Almost all parents believed that their children enjoyed school, developed a good range of learning skills, were safe and were developing good awareness of other cultures.
- Almost all parents and most teachers thought that the school was well led.
- A significant minority of parents thought that communications could be improved and that the purpose and regularity of homework should be reviewed in order to assist them in supporting their children’s learning.
- Responses concerning students with special educational needs were largely positive. Most indicated that the school was inclusive and supported these students well.
- Most parents thought that the school provided students with a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

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

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the inspection report. This 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 school inspection will report on changes 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