

Jumeirah English Speaking School - Arabian Ranches Inspection Report

Foundation Stage to Post-16

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.

Jumeirah English Speaking School - Arabian Ranches 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 Arabian Ranches, Jumeirah English Speaking School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to Year 13, aged three to 18 years. The school follows the National Curriculum for England to the end of Key Stage 4, when the students are 16. At the end of this stage students complete GCSE examinations. In the sixth form the school offers the International Baccalaureate (IB). At the time of the inspection there were 1,291 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was good.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents were highly supportive of the school; there were very few negative comments. Parents were very pleased with their children's progress in English, mathematics and science and valued highly the quality of teaching and the provision of extra-curricular opportunities. Parents considered the quality of teaching to be the school's greatest strength. They considered students' behaviour at the school to be very good and expressed the view that the quality of support for all students was good. Most parents valued highly the level of communication between home and school and thought that school reports and homework were consistently of a good standard. Almost all parents considered the school to be well led, although a minority were unsure how the school had responded to the recommendations of the previous inspection.

How well does the school perform overall?

Jumeirah English Speaking School (Arabian Ranches) provided a good quality of education for students. The school had sustained and consolidated the strengths identified in the previous inspections and had responded impressively to most of the inspection's findings. Transition arrangements between the phases had improved. Secondary students were better prepared for their move onto the IB programme, best teaching and learning practice had been shared across the phases and a more consistent approach to marking had been firmly embedded. Levels of attainment and progress throughout the school in Islamic Education and Arabic had not yet been sufficiently raised. Overall, at all levels, the school demonstrated a strong capacity to improve.

Students' attainment in Islamic Education and Arabic was acceptable, as was the progress in Arabic as a second language. Progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as a first language was unsatisfactory. Students' attainment and progress in English were outstanding in Foundation Stage and primary and were good in secondary and post-16. In both mathematics and science, students' attainment and progress were outstanding from Foundation Stage to secondary, and were good at the post-16 phase. Students' personal development was good throughout the school. A strength of the school was the children's and students' deep understanding of their local environment and of Dubai. Teaching for effective learning was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and primary school, and was good overall in secondary and post-16. Assessment was good from the primary phase onwards, and the school had taken significant steps to ensure best marking and tracking procedures were embedded. The school identified that further work remained to be done in this area of its practice. The quality and suitability of the curriculum was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good across the other phases. The school had made impressive efforts to provide exciting and well taught IB courses, while its extra-curricular programme remained outstanding. Health and safety arrangements in the school were outstanding. Students felt well supported in all aspects of their work, although benchmarking and the tracking of progress in Islamic Education and Arabic were not adequately robust. Attendance was good and staff managed behaviour and guidance issues thoughtfully and effectively. The few students with special educational needs made good progress in their learning as a result of skilful identification and prompt interventions to meet their specific learning requirements, particularly in literacy. Leadership at all levels across the school was committed and professional. The governors and Director had established a dynamic school with a strong reputation amongst the families it served. The school was secure in its core values while at the same time keen to improve and realise international ambitions. Middle leaders were especially passionate about the mission to 'Achieve Excellence Together', resulting in a tangible improvement culture from Foundation Stage to Year 13. The school was well placed to build on significant current strengths and address identified shortcomings, in the best interests of all its students.

Key features of the school

- The outstanding provision for children in the Foundation Stage;
- The outstanding attainment in English, mathematics and science at primary phases and in mathematics and science in the secondary phase;
- The outstanding economic and environmental understanding of students across the school;
- The exciting array of extra-curricular activities which involve almost all students;
- The excellent resources which contribute significantly to the quality of learning in all four phases;
- The significant progress which has been made in establishing the International Baccalaureate (IB) in the sixth form;
- Students' attainment and progress in Islamic Education and Arabic were not consistently acceptable across the school.

Recommendations

- Ensure that the time allocated to Islamic Education for Muslim students meets Ministry of Education requirements;
- Raise levels of attainment and improve students' progress throughout the school in Islamic Education and Arabic;
- Set increasingly ambitious targets in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations for higher attaining students, benchmarked against the best international standards;
- Embed current assessment practice and the tracking of students' progress across all phases in order to raise attainment;
- Develop the curriculum and the school's organisational systems to realise the well articulated 3 to 18 vision.

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

In Islamic Education, attainment was acceptable in primary and secondary while progress was unsatisfactory. Arab and non-Arab Muslim students in Years 1 to 6 had acceptable levels of knowledge of the basic principles of Islam. Most could explain expected behaviours from a good Muslim. The majority of students could recite a few short chapters from The Holy Qur'an. However, their progress was unsatisfactory as the school did not provide Islamic Education lessons for most Muslim students in primary at the time of the inspection. In secondary, the majority of students, both Arabs and non Arabs, had acceptable attainment and could discuss and explain what they learnt with great passion. They demonstrated well-developed

understanding of how the values of Islam could be applied in the modern world. They discussed examples of links between scientific knowledge and The Holy Qur'an. However, for the majority of students, their ability to recite and understand verses from The Holy Qur'an was below the expected levels.

In Arabic as a first language, students' attainment was acceptable in both primary and secondary while the progress they made was unsatisfactory in both phases. The majority of younger students had acceptable listening and speaking skills and most of them read words and short texts well, while their writing skills were not sufficiently developed. The progress most students made through attending classes for Arabic as an additional language was unsatisfactory. Similarly, in secondary, the majority of students had acceptable levels of attainment in all aspects of the learnt language. However, a significant minority had limited reading and writing skills, and progress for most students was inhibited by the low expectations in most of the Arabic as an additional language classes which they attended.

In Arabic as an additional language, students' attainment and progress were both acceptable in the primary and secondary phases. Most of the younger students made good progress with listening and speaking skills, particularly in Key Stage One, while their progress with the reading and writing of letters and familiar words was acceptable. Older primary students learnt and used many words and common phrases but their progress in other aspects of the language was slower. In secondary, most students made acceptable progress learning a good range of vocabulary and steadily improved their ability to read and write Arabic cursive script, although their reading comprehension skills were less well developed. Most of them were too reliant in their production of the language on using a limited range of rehearsed patterns or on teacher guidance.

Attainment and progress in English in the Foundation Stage and primary phase were outstanding. In the secondary and post-16 phases they were good. In Foundation Stage children demonstrated skills as confident speakers and engaged listeners, and a majority demonstrated emerging writing skills. By Year 4, almost all students listened with concentration and used both orally and in writing, interesting vocabulary and appropriate grammar. Most students by the end of the primary phase were reading a range of genres, and writing fiction and non-fiction at a standard above age-related norms. Key Stage 3 students demonstrated well constructed and linked paragraphs in their writing on Shakespeare. The majority of Year 11 students were analysing poetic techniques with a confident command of appropriate specialist vocabulary. The majority of students in IB classes in English demonstrated textual knowledge about poetry and novels in line with the highest international standards.

Students' attainment and progress in mathematics was outstanding in the Foundation, primary and secondary stages and good at post-16. In the Foundation Stage, children could recognise patterns and use emerging vocabulary to solve simple problems with number and shape. In Year 3 students could accurately measure the weight of parcels and use information to calculate postage. By Year 6, students' understanding of number, shape and data was above age-related expectations. This progress was maintained at the secondary stages. In Year 11, students were able to generate simultaneous equations from real-world situations and

accurately solve them. This ability to apply mathematics was also evident at post-16. Year 13 students could differentiate functions and discuss possible applications.

Attainment and progress in science were outstanding in the Foundation Stage and the primary and secondary phases and at post-16 they were good. In Foundation Stage, children developed their knowledge and understanding of the world through a practical, multi-sensory approach. At the end of primary phase most students knew and understood a range of scientific facts, processes and principles and could design and carry out investigations using a fair test. By the end of secondary phase, students had an extensive knowledge and understanding of how biological systems function. They could describe and explain the nature and behaviour of, and changes to, materials. They could use their knowledge and understanding of physical processes to explain physical phenomena. Post-16 students were developing their knowledge and understanding of radiation. They could explain how random mutations and dominant genes cause variations in species.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Students' attitudes and behaviour were outstanding in Foundation Stage and primary and good in secondary and post-16. Students enjoyed school. Almost all had firm friendships and regarded teachers as caring and supportive. At all levels students expressed themselves confidently. They appreciated the value of good health and could describe how they personally made choices to support their well-being in areas of nutrition, exercise, hygiene and rest. Attendance was good. However, there was, at times, a casual attitude towards punctuality among a few teachers and students in the secondary school.

Foundation Stage and primary students had an outstanding age-appropriate understanding of Islam derived from their Muslim friends and class projects. They had a positive outgoing attitude towards living in Dubai and showed appreciation of its architecture. Older students' understanding of Islam was good. They had a mature interest in connections between Islam and science. Their basic knowledge about Islamic beliefs and values was less developed. Through Creativity, Action and Service (CAS) in the IB programme, students were learning to organise community service activities in the school as well as local and global community. There was less evidence of student-initiated community action.

At all levels students had an outstanding awareness of the local environment in which they lived. Knowledge about a range of environmental issues was strong and students expressed reasoned personal opinions. Older students were very well informed about Dubai's historic and current economy, and understood the connections to environmental issues. Fieldwork and trips locally supported their understanding very well.

How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching and learning were outstanding in the Foundation and primary phase and good in the secondary school and post-16. Successful teaching was characterised by teachers' excellent subject knowledge and their detailed understanding of the students' skills. Classroom environments were attractive in the primary phase, although in the secondary and post-16

phases students' own high quality work was not consistently on display. Teachers' termly and weekly planning was of a high quality across the school, and teachers used books, materials and technology with creativity to engage students. For example, Year 4 teachers used collage-making to stimulate high quality poetry writing. Teachers shared with clarity the lesson objectives and explained carefully any differentiated activities. They harnessed time effectively and expected students to complete challenging tasks and then reflect on what they had learned, for example in Year 11 science and Year 6 mathematics classes. Teachers and support staff circulated around their classes questioning and intervened effectively to develop learning. Teachers set meaningful homework activities throughout the primary and secondary phases, and created for IB students independent learning tasks of high quality. However, at the secondary stage, there were not yet sufficiently high expectations for higher achieving students.

The whole school had successfully developed children and students' skills as independent, enquiring learners. This approach was developing well across all phases of the school. Skilfully enabled by the teachers, Year 6 students taught newly acquired knowledge to their peers in English. In Physical Education (PE) classes, students were adept at demonstrating new skills to fellow students. In mathematics and science, students learned difficult new concepts and applied them confidently without fear of failure. Students were equally adept at applying classroom learning to wider contexts. They collaborated and competed in classroom activities in ways that served to motivate all learners.

Assessment was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good throughout the rest of the school. Teachers had excellent procedures in place to identify children's starting points in the Foundation Stage, demonstrated in individual children's learning journals. The tracking of students' progress through the primary and secondary phases was secure and recent developments with data storage had successfully embedded this practice. Teachers knew the current levels and future targets for their students, in many cases displayed on classroom notice-boards. Students themselves knew their National Curriculum levels and what they needed to do to reach a higher level in Key Stage 2 and 3, and a higher GCSE grade in Years 10 and 11. 'Close the gap' marking of good and very high quality was seen across the school, with best practices shared from Year 2 to Year 13. However, much of this best practice was not evident in Islamic Education and Arabic departments.

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

The school's curriculum was outstanding in the Foundation Stage and good across primary, secondary and post-16 phases. Progression and coherence up to the end of Key Stage 4 were provided through the English Foundation and National Curriculum programmes and, at post-16, through the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). In addition, students studied Arabic at the primary stage. The school did not meet Ministry of Education requirements at primary level as Muslim students did not have sufficient time studying this subject. Students' choice was provided at the end of Key Stage 3 through a range of option

blocks. The curriculum was reviewed annually across all sections of the school and suitable action plans were produced. Appropriate support was provided across the curriculum for students experiencing learning difficulties. An accelerated learning programme had recently been established to challenge and stimulate gifted and talented students. A number of subject areas had developed cross-curricular links, where departments worked together on shared projects. The school had made clear improvements in the preparation of students for transfer across phases. The introduction of the IBDP had contributed to a more collaborative approach and the special ethos of the IBDP extended well beyond the sixth form. The rich extra-curricular programme available to students, particularly in music and sports, remained a key strength of the school. One notable student-led initiative involved the production of a radio podcast, which provided a platform for the school community to share news, views and musical talent.

How well does the school protect and support students?

The protection and support for students was outstanding at all levels of the school. The buildings and grounds offered a well-maintained and attractive environment for learning. Security at entrances and careful supervision throughout the day ensured students' safety. Staff knew the arrangements for child protection and the procedures for emergencies. Pool safety was ensured through clear procedures. Equipment and chemicals were stored safely in laboratories and first-aid boxes were refreshed appropriately. Bus transport was well-supervised and students' behaviour on the buses was generally good. A minority of students cycled to school although almost all disregarded advice to wear helmets. The choice of food in the cafeteria and many sporting extra-curricular options encouraged healthy habits for life. The curriculum supported understanding of health at a deeper level. In PE, students experienced the psychological and social, as well as the physical benefits of participation. The health centre team provided support to primary classes and individual guidance to students in actively managing their health needs.

At Foundation Stage the quality of support was outstanding and good at all other stages. Staff had positive relationships with students throughout the school. Careful tracking and use of data on students' academic and personal development facilitated the provision of well targeted and flexible support in all areas except Islamic Education and Arabic. Early interventions and creative responses to needs supported the youngest learners. Appropriate additional challenge was offered in a few subjects. Recent improvements in transition arrangements within and between the JESS schools have been supportive to students' well-being and academic progress and commented upon by parents in their meeting with inspectors.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership and management were good. The Director's vision for 3 to 18 education was well-articulated and he had judged skilfully the complex range of developments across the school. His ambition was shared clearly with senior leaders who were focused strongly on raising

standards across the phases. There was a clear sense of shared purpose within the school. A strength of leadership was the alacrity with which middle leaders had responded to most recommendations from the previous inspection, although matters were unresolved in Islamic Education and Arabic. Best practice had been shared between primary and secondary teachers, for example with implementing effective new approaches to writing and communication across the curriculum. Previously identified weaknesses in transition had been robustly addressed. The development of IB had been given a particular focus, with very positive impact on sixth form students. Continuous professional development opportunities, focused on students' outcomes, were well judged, and performance management systems had been securely embedded. Leaders at all levels demonstrated a strong capacity to improve.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. The views of parents and other stakeholders were taken into account effectively, for example in effectively preparing secondary students for embarking on IB courses. The headteachers, who knew their respective phases well, had rightly identified the need to bring together documentation across the 3 to 18 age range, and to be sharper in documenting the impact of the school's actions on students' progress, particularly for higher attainers. Middle leaders conducted regular, high quality audits of their areas of responsibility sharing their findings across the phases; for example, 'close the gap' marking had improved for all students as a result of effective communication between primary and secondary colleagues.

Partnerships with parents and the community were outstanding. Parents who had been associated with the school since its opening spoke eloquently of its well planned growth, and of their appreciation of the teachers and their 'tireless efforts for our children'. They considered communication and regular reporting on students' progress to be strong features of all phases. The school enjoyed extensive links with other schools, across the UAE and internationally, bringing its own students into contact with others through sport, music and educational visits. Positive initiatives within IB courses had accelerated the school's ambitions to be more international in its outlook.

Governance was good. The governors had an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and points for development and over many years had exerted a very positive influence over its strategic direction. The governors consistently held senior staff to account for students' standards and they played a significant role, with the Director, in planning for the school's expansion. While almost all governors have been parents over a period of time, there was no elected parent or staff representation.

Staffing, facilities and resources were good. Teaching staff were generally well qualified, although the school was short of a teacher for Islamic Education. Deployment of well qualified, specialist teachers and support staff was excellent. Rich resources in classrooms were a significant factor in many of the most effective learning observed across all phases. There were some outstanding sporting and library facilities, but space for sixth form study was limited, although the governors had clear plans to address this shortcoming. Information and Communication technology (ICT) enhanced learning in most classrooms.

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:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?				
3% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not Applicable
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Not Applicable

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in mathematics?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attainment	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good
Progress over time	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good

How good is the students' personal and social development?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Attitudes and behaviour	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Islamic, cultural and civic understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Economic and environmental understanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding

How good are teaching and learning?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Teaching for effective learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Quality of students' learning	Outstanding	Outstanding	Good	Good
Assessment	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Curriculum quality	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

How well does the school protect and support students?				
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary	Secondary	Post-16
Health and safety	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
Quality of support	Outstanding	Good	Good	Good

How good are the leadership and management of the school?	
	Overall
Quality of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Outstanding
Governance	Good
Staffing, facilities and resources	Good

How well does the school perform overall?
Good

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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