

Jumeirah English Speaking School Inspection Report

Foundation Stage to Primary

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 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 Jumeirah, Jumeirah English Speaking School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Foundation Stage to Primary, aged three to 11 years. The school follows the English National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 750 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was outstanding.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau (DSIB) analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Approximately half of the school's parents responded to the questionnaire. They expressed their delight with the school, especially with the quality of teaching and learning. They also appreciated the happy and supportive ethos, the students' behaviour and their attitudes to work, the quality of care, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, partnerships with parents, the learning facilities and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Most parents thought that the school had worked hard to improve the provision for students in Islamic Education and Arabic. Almost all parents expressed overwhelming support for the work of all aspects of the school. They felt that their children were kept safe and were extremely well-cared for. The respondents said that the quality of teaching was excellent, learning was enquiry led and the outcomes were very high. Parents were all happy with the quality of communication with the school. Almost all parents felt the school was very well led. They said the school had responded well to the recommendations from the previous inspection and were very pleased with the quality of education on offer at the school.

How well does the school perform overall?

The overall performance of the Jumeirah English Speaking School was outstanding. The school had responded well to the findings of the previous inspection and had made significant progress in addressing its recommendations. Improvements in Arabic teaching had taken place. Arabic attainment was acceptable and progress good as a result of fresh approaches to the subject by a new team of teachers. Teachers' planning across other subjects had improved to meet the needs of all students.

In English, mathematics and science both attainment and progress were outstanding across the Foundation Stage and primary years. These excellent results by students were founded in outstanding teaching and learning across all year groups. Teachers planned and delivered high quality lessons and provided excellent resources, including modern technologies, to stimulate students' interests. The classroom environments presented a rich mix of interactive displays and a wide range of helpful learning prompts. In their turn, students demonstrated consistently positive attitudes to working in groups and as whole classes. Across the age ranges the sheer love of learning shone through. Students had developed strong independent enquiry skills and a minority were performing in mathematics and English at an exceptional level for their age. Assessment was effective in three of the key subjects, in particular students' participation in their own reviews of progress and 'next best steps'. However, the use of data and the effective tracking of progress were under-developed in Islamic Education and Arabic. The curriculum was outstanding; cross-curricular themes were skilfully planned and students learned imaginatively in an inter-disciplinary way. New technologies to further an exciting curriculum were properly under consideration. The programme of extra-curricular activities was rich and much enjoyed by the students. Students' personal development was outstanding, as was their participation in a wide range of responsibilities and civic contributions to the life of the school and the wider community. Less well embedded was their appreciation of Islam and local traditions. The school's support and protection of students were outstanding. Parents commented on the way in which staff knew every child as an individual, a feature which promoted students' self-confidence from the earliest years. The leadership of the school, at all levels, had worked with great commitment and sense of mission to drive the school forward over the past year, effecting improvements of which they could be rightly proud. The school delivered fully on an ambitious set of promises to parents and had proven capacity to further its international ambitions.

Key features of the school

- The students' attainment in English, mathematics and science at age eleven were at consistently high levels;
- Significant improvements in the provision for Arabic have been secured, leading to improved students' attitudes towards the study of the language;
- The students displayed excellent independent learning skills and a joy in learning, from Foundation Stage to Year 6;
- The teaching, learning and curriculum across all years groups were outstanding;

- The staff's care and support for all students were exemplary;
- The school's learning environment and resources were of a very high quality;
- The dedicated leadership of the senior team has sustained and built on previous strengths.

Recommendations

- Develop assessment and self-evaluation systems in Islamic Education and Arabic which match embedded practices in the other key subjects;
- Increase opportunities for students to use advanced technology to support independent learning in all areas of the curriculum.

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

In Islamic Education, students' attainment in the primary phase was acceptable while they made good progress overall. Most of the non-Arabic speaking Muslims had a sound knowledge about the five pillars of Islam. They demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge of the main values and practices in Islam. The majority could recite a few short chapters of the Holy Qur'an. The few Arab Muslim students in primary had acceptable knowledge of the main facts about the Prophet and the early history of Islam. Their Qur'an recitation skills, however, were less developed. The progress of a minority of students was inhibited by their limited listening skills. Across the school, only a minority of Muslim students linked what they learned to their life in the school or in the wider community.

In Arabic as a first language, attainment was acceptable while progress was good overall. The small number of students who studied the subject demonstrated good reading skills. Younger students identified letters and their corresponding sounds and most of them read familiar words with acceptable pronunciation. Their speaking skills were developing well and they made good progress in increasing the range of vocabulary they used. They also improved their ability to write words and short phrases in cursive form. The majority of older students reached an acceptable level of reading and made good progress in listening. However, their progress in writing was relatively limited and this inhibited the rate of their progress in the other skills.

In Arabic as an additional language, attainment was acceptable, while progress was good overall, with younger students making the best progress in the primary stage. Almost all students in the lower grades made significant progress in learning a good range of words and short, common phrases and used them well in their oral communication. Most of them made good progress in learning the Arabic alphabet. They developed their ability to read the words they learnt and to join the letters to form simple words in cursive handwriting. Older students were developing speaking skills and were also increasing the range of words and phrases they knew but their progress was generally slower. Most of them read short, familiar texts with a few errors and their writing was less developed.

Students' attainment and progress in English was outstanding across all phases of the school. Year 6 students attained well above average in the UK National Curriculum tests. All students developed strong speaking and listening skills in the Foundation Stage and, early in their primary years, were able to talk with assurance in a range of situations, investigating and communicating ideas. In Key Stage 2 almost all students developed variations of expression and vocabulary to engage the listeners' interest. Strongly developed phonic skills allowed them to decode text and spell well. When reading, they showed understanding of various genres and the majority of students in Years 5 and 6 were able to identify layers of meaning in challenging texts. Primary students' formal writing skills were well structured, imaginative and accurate. Older students could spell irregular words with accuracy, had a confident command of grammar, and created narrative writing of complexity. A minority demonstrated exceptional performance in reading and writing skills.

Attainment and progress in mathematics were outstanding in both the Foundation Stage and primary phase, with Year 6 students attaining well above average standards in the UK National Curriculum tests. Children in the Foundation Stage classes could count reliably up to ten everyday objects and could draw circles in sand trays. Foundation Stage 2 students could describe key properties of basic 2D shapes, such as the number of sides of a triangle. Students in Year 5 were confident in searching the Internet for images of 3D geometric solids and creating short presentations to illustrate the special features of, for example, a cuboid. In all years, students were encouraged to hypothesise, estimate, investigate and solve mathematical problems and could describe what they were doing with confidence.

Attainment and progress in science in both the Foundation Stage and the primary phase were outstanding. In Foundation Stage, children's learning was rich and enjoyable. They developed their knowledge and understanding of the world through a practical, multi-sensory approach. By the end of the primary phase, most students had attained well-above average against the National Curriculum benchmarks and knew and understood a range of scientific facts, processes and principles. Most could explain the processes of photosynthesis and pollination and could design and carry out investigations using a fair test.

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Throughout the school, students had outstanding attitudes and behaviour. Their behaviour was excellent: they were very sensible, thoughtful and respectful of others. In lessons, students listened intently and responded eagerly; they said that they really enjoyed learning new skills. They arrived promptly for lessons and sustained impressive concentration. Students benefited considerably from group work but were equally happy to work on their own. Attendance was outstanding.

Students' civic and Islamic understanding was good throughout the school. Students were very responsible around school. They said how much they enjoyed being trusted and all of them, even the very youngest, readily carried out many and varied duties. The long list of tasks included resource managers, recycling monitors and a newspaper team which produced the JESS News twice each term. Students learned about key figures in Dubai, including Sheikh

Mohammed, and different cultures were celebrated throughout the school. For example, they explored desert landscapes in art, produced local clothing and knew about Middle Eastern spices; older students undertook a field trip to Hatta. However, their deeper understanding and appreciation of Islam and local traditions was under-developed.

Students had an outstanding awareness of the economy of Dubai and environmental issues. Even students in Years 1 and 2 knew about the recent rapid growth of the city. Many visitors promoted aspects of Dubai and its culture. Students actively fundraised for local charities, including the purchasing of sewing machines to help women start businesses in another emirate. The school's eco-club had succeeded in promoting recycling; students held competitions to reduce water consumption.

How good are the teaching and learning?

Teaching and learning were outstanding throughout all phases of the school. High quality teaching was characterised by teachers' expert knowledge of subjects and of child development. Teachers took great pride in their own classrooms with the result that each room provided an outstanding environment in which to learn; displays of high quality work in mathematics, English, art and geography were evident. Teachers planned lessons meticulously and harnessed a rich array of resources to stimulate students' learning. Teachers shared lesson objectives clearly and set high expectations of what students should achieve when working in pairs or in groups. They used time skilfully, and circulated around classrooms intervening with strong impact, moving students on to higher order thinking. Teachers were as focused on extending the scholarship of higher attainers as they were nurturing the few students with special educational needs.

The quality of students' learning was outstanding across all phases. Students arrived in Foundation Stage with very positive pre-dispositions to learn and rapidly developed positive independent learning and enquiry skills. As students moved up through the school they made consistently strong progress because their attitudes towards one another and their peers in classrooms were excellent. They handled resources carefully, and made effective use of books, materials and laptops to extend their knowledge. They welcomed the opportunity to be challenged by quite difficult concepts. A Year 4 class, for example, was hypothesising on children's access to water in rural India. The school had made a special effort this year to develop students as independent learners and this was being successfully achieved to the benefit of all students.

Assessment was outstanding at Foundation Stage and good in primary. The school had secure procedures that afforded staff with a clear view of students' attainment and progress through the school. Teachers in the Foundation Stage evaluated the progress children were making towards the early learning goals. Teachers made effective use of data in most of the key subjects, so that targets were both realistic and ambitious. The school was at an early stage of developing these in Islamic Education and Arabic. Fortnightly 'pupil conferencing' with each student meant that tracking of progress was systematic. Students themselves made very effective use of the home-school learning diaries to communicate successes and difficulties to

their teachers and parents. Teachers' marking in English, mathematics and science was exemplary.

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

The curriculum, based on the national curriculum for England, was outstanding across all phases of the school. It had an explicit rationale, and was challenging and exciting. The school delivered fully on its promise to parents with a broad curriculum designed to be stimulating and meet the diverse range of student needs. An appropriate time and emphasis was given to each subject and aspect, producing an effective integration of knowledge, skills and understanding for all of the students. The school has made special provision for teaching Arabic to all of its students and offered Islamic Education to Muslim students without disadvantaging the students in terms of new learning or social interaction. The breadth of the curriculum was extensive and the level of challenge high in all years. Setting from Year 3 to Year 6 in mathematics allowed for different abilities to achieve their full potential and offered opportunities for students to accelerate to a higher year group. The curriculum was regularly reviewed with a specific and different focus on each occasion. Progression arrangements from Foundation to Year 1 and from Year 6 to Year 7 were well established. All years in the primary phase had provision for cross-curricular lessons. Teachers had established strategies to enable students to engage in topic work, for example, comparative studies of mountains and deserts of the world. The extra-curricular programme was extensive and diverse in its coverage of physical, artistic and cultural activity covering such areas as cooking, basketball, typing, dance and drama. The school readily responded to the challenges of the local and wider environment, for example, focusing on topics such as waste recycling and the Chilean miners' rescue.

How well does the school protect and support students?

Health and safety and the arrangements for protecting students were both outstanding. All staff took their duty of care seriously and adhered to the policies for health and safety which were regularly evaluated for their effectiveness. For example, the child protection policy had been recently reviewed to ensure procedures and responsibilities were known throughout the school. Security guards patrolled the site throughout the day and senior staff were on duty each morning. Buildings and facilities were safe, secure and well-maintained and teaching areas were clean, bright and well ventilated. Procedures for emergencies, such as fire drills, were established and equipment was checked regularly. Risk assessments ensured accidents were rare. Healthy living was promoted through the curriculum and after-school activities with additional, sensitive care, guidance and support from the school nurse who was proactive in working with students and families.

The quality of support for students was outstanding and underpinned the success of the school. All students, including those with additional support needs, were known, valued and provided for as individuals and so relationships were excellent. Adults were approachable role-models

and students followed their example in supporting each other. Systems for monitoring students' progress, sharing information and bringing about improvements were well established and effective. Parents were highly supportive of the school's rigorous and proactive approach to promoting good attendance.

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

Leadership and management in the school were outstanding. The school had a well established culture: high expectations of all those who teach and learn within its high quality environment. The Headteacher and her senior team were relentless in their pursuit of excellence, judiciously balancing challenge and support as required. Across the staff there was a very strong sense of purpose and dedication to maximising outcomes for the students. The ethos of collective responsibility and distributed leadership was exemplary. Structures for effective management were secure and middle leaders were actively involved in setting priorities for future improvements. The school's key priority to create students as independent learners was being successfully led at all levels.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were good. Senior leaders knew the school's strengths and points for development through sharply focused, well-recorded learning walks. Relevant documentation was reviewed and updated regularly, with a strong focus on how teachers' initiatives impacted on the learning of students. Self-review was well embedded with year leaders and subject leaders. Communication within the school on taking forward key priorities was excellent. While the key subjects of English, mathematics and science benefited from strong self-evaluation, this had not yet been fully embedded in Islamic Education and Arabic.

Partnerships with parents and with the community were outstanding. Parents were very effectively engaged in the life of the school, supporting clubs and extra-curricular activities, creating materials for classrooms, acting as reading volunteers, and accompanying school trips. A group of parents was active in fund-raising, further enriching the school's excellent resources. Reporting to parents on the day-to-day, weekly and termly progress of their children was of a high quality, commented on in the inspectors' meeting with parents. The school enjoyed an extensive array of links with business organisations, with visitors into classrooms from across Dubai and the UAE. The school engaged effectively with local schools through music and sporting competitions.

Governance was good. The governors maintained an appropriate monitoring role, particularly in relation to financial due diligence and received regular reports from the Director on educational developments and outcomes. The governors were keenly aware of the pressures the school faced in order to sustain its considerable strengths into the future. While a number of stakeholders were represented on the governing body, there was no elected parent or staff representation.

Staffing, facilities and resources were outstanding. The teaching and support staff were well qualified and continuity with very good teachers was a hallmark of the school's provision. Administrative systems were of a high order. Facilities were maintained to a very high standard, including well designed shaded areas and the much used swimming pools. Resources for teaching and learning were abundant, up-to-date and were a major factor in the school's outstanding educational provision for the students.

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
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?		
1% of students in the school studied Arabic as a first language.		
Age group:	Foundation Stage	Primary
Attainment in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress in Arabic as a first language	Not Applicable	Good
Attainment in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Acceptable
Progress in Arabic as an additional language	Not Applicable	Good

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Outstanding

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

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