

INSPECTION REPORT

Emirates English Speaking School

Report published in February 2014

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT Emirates English Speaking School

Location	Al Safa
Type of school	Private
Website	www.eess.sch.ae
Telephone	04-3947355
Address	P.O Box: 7575 Dubai, UAE
Principal	Shah Shamsuddin Usmani Tabrez
Curriculum	CBSE
Gender of students	Boys and Girls
Age / Grades or Year Groups	3-18 / KG 1- Grade 12
Attendance	Acceptable
Number of students on roll	1914
Largest nationality group of students	Indian
Number of Emirati students	0 (0%)
Date of the inspection	23rd September to 26th September

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The context of the school

Located in Al Safa 1 since 1988, Emirates English Speaking School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten to secondary, age three to eighteen years.

The school followed the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum from Grades 10 through to 12. Classes in Kindergarten to Grade 4 were mixed. Boys and girls were taught separately from Grade 5 to Grade 12. In Kindergarten and primary phases, class sizes were large. In Kindergarten, parent volunteers supported the teachers and children.

At the time of inspection there were 1914 students on the roll. This represented a 12 per cent increase compared to the previous year. Approximately one half of the student population was in the primary phase and around a quarter were in the Kindergarten phase. Eight additional classrooms had been constructed to house this increase. The majority of the students were from India, Pakistan or the Philippines. There were no Emirati students.

The Principal had been in post for 17 years. He was supported by an experienced vice principal. Two directors representing the owner had roles in overseeing progress and development of infrastructure. There were 102 teachers, about a third of whom were new to the school this year. Thirty two students were identified with a special educational need and were supported by external counsellors.

Overall school performance 2013-2014

Acceptable

Key strengths

- The school had a caring ethos;
- Attitudes and behaviour of students were at least good in all phases;
- Students in all phases had a good understanding of Islamic values and local, cultural and global awareness;
- There were aspects of strong teaching in the secondary school;
- The provision for health and safety was good across the school;
- There were good partnerships with parents and the community.

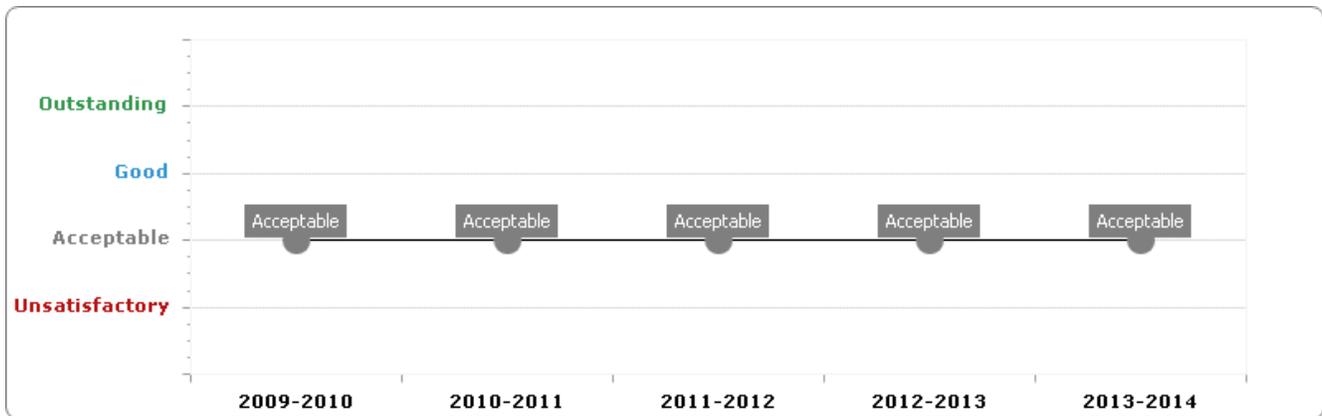
Recommendations

- Improve all aspects of the provision Kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2 including space, resources and the quality of teaching and learning;
- Improve attainment, progress and learning skills in all phases by developing students' abilities to evaluate their own work and make connections between previous and new learning;
- Improve teaching across phases by implementing effective professional development and sharing good practice that exists in the secondary phase;
- Improve assessment to ensure that all teachers have accurate information about students' attainments and progress so that they can modify lessons to meet the needs of all students;
- Make all leaders responsible for improving the identified weaknesses in all phases of the school;
- Comply with KHDA requirements for the teaching of Arabic as an additional language in Grade 9.

Progress since the last inspection

- There was unsatisfactory provision and outcomes in Kindergarten in almost all key aspects;
- Attainment and progress had declined in Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language in primary and middle school;
- Provision for students with special educational needs was inconsistent;
- Support for students to make healthy living choices was good across all phases, and students in secondary phase benefited from good support when making choices for their future;
- Information communication technology provision had improved across all phases of the school.

Trend of overall performance



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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Islamic Education				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic as a first language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Progress	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Arabic as an additional language				
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable
English				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good	Good
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Good	Good
Science				
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Progress	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

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	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Quality of students' learning skills	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Personal responsibility	Good	Good	Good	Outstanding
Students' understanding of Islamic values and their local, cultural and global awareness	Good	Good	Good	Good
Community and environmental responsibility	Acceptable	Good	Good	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Assessment	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

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

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum design to meet the individual needs of students	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

	KG	Primary	Middle	Secondary
Health and Safety	Good	Good	Good	Good
Quality of Support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

	Whole school
Quality of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, including staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

[Read paragraph](#)

How good are the students' attainment and progress?

In Islamic Education, the Qur'an recitation skills of the majority of students in the secondary phase were good. In the primary and middle phases, these skills were only acceptable. In Arabic as an additional language, most students' listening and responding skills were acceptable. Students understood the teachers' simple instructions and explanations of new language. Attainment in English was unsatisfactory in Kindergarten. Children had limited opportunities to develop key skills in speaking, listening reading and writing. In all other phases attainment was good. Students interpreted written material and used spoken and written English effectively to communicate. Attainment in mathematics was inconsistent across and within different phases. In the Kindergarten and the lower primary classes attainment was unsatisfactory, but in the upper primary classes it was acceptable. The mathematical knowledge of students in the upper primary classes and in the middle phase was built systematically. Students in the secondary phase demonstrated good levels of knowledge, skill and understanding. In science in Kindergarten attainment levels of almost all children were below expected levels. Children were able to colour pictures but they could not observe accurately or describe differences in their environment. As students progressed up the school, levels of attainment increased, but overall were restricted by the focus on knowledge and its recall. By the middle phase some problem solving and research occurred and in the secondary phase students exhibited strong knowledge, application and problem solving skills.

In Islamic Education, students' progress was better in Qur'an recitation than in other aspects of the subject. In Arabic, students' progress in reading and writing was significantly slower than in listening speaking. Students made unsatisfactory progress in most lessons due to a lack of clarity of learning outcomes and insufficient challenge. Progress in English in Kindergarten was unsatisfactory. Lessons did not build on children's existing skills and knowledge to ensure meaningful learning of literacy skills. In other phases progress was good as the focus moved to building, consolidating and applying vocabulary, grammatical structures and writing genres. In mathematics in the primary phase, though progress was acceptable overall, progress in problem solving and thinking critically was weak. Students lacked the confidence to apply their knowledge. Students' progress improved in the secondary phase demonstrated good levels of competence. In science, progress in the lower school was inhibited by the exclusive focus on the recall of facts. Progress was better in Secondary where students applied their knowledge to new situations and developed their understanding through practical investigations.

[View judgements](#)

Quality of students' learning skills

Learning skills in the Kindergarten and lower primary classes were unsatisfactory. Students across all phases lacked skills to work independently. Boys in particular were easily distracted and girls were often passive in lessons. Learning in the upper primary and the middle phase was acceptable. Students could work for short periods of time without direct teacher input. They had limited ability to use their knowledge to solve problems collaboratively and to make connections between new and previous learning. However, the learning skills of students in the secondary phase were good. Students made good use of previous knowledge to tackle new challenges confidently and successfully. They worked collaboratively in groups and shared ideas effectively to reach common goals. They developed good critical and analytical skills. They were able to see the relationship between good attainment in a range of subjects and their future choices of careers.

[View judgements](#)

How good is the students' personal and social development?

Personal responsibility was good throughout and in secondary it was outstanding. Throughout the school, students had sensible and mature attitudes. They showed an increasing self-reliance as they progressed up the school. Positive behaviour was a strength of the school, with self-control and courtesy being strong features. Students were proud of their school, their teachers and each other. Almost all had a good understanding of healthy eating. They made sincere attempts to follow the school's advice on maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Most attended regularly and almost all arrived at school punctually. Almost all students demonstrated good understanding and appreciation of Islamic values. Intercultural understanding and respect for the rights and differences of others were apparent as students celebrated their own cultures and valued the traditions of others. Students were aware of the opportunities that Dubai offers for residents and visitors and had knowledge of how Dubai has evolved physically, economically and culturally. Students from primary, middle and secondary phases took care of the school environment and demonstrated respect for the environment beyond the school. They had an awareness of water and energy conservation and the need to preserve forests and the green environment. Kindergarten children had limited opportunities to develop independence and accept responsibility for their actions. Students willingly accepted opportunities provided by the school to engage in competitions within and beyond the school.

[View judgements](#)

How good are teaching and assessment?

Teaching was unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten, acceptable in the primary and middle phases of the school. It was good in the secondary phase. Most teachers demonstrated secure subject knowledge but their understanding of how students learn best was often underdeveloped, particularly in the Kindergarten and the primary phase. Across the school, most teachers' lesson plans did not include clear, measurable, and challenging learning objectives. They also lacked activities that would meet the different learning needs of students. Teacher-student interactions were better in the upper phases of the school. However, they were mainly restricted to teachers questioning individual students or eliciting whole class responses. Except in the secondary phase, lessons were mainly teacher-directed leading to a lack of opportunities for students to be independent and active learners. Most teachers used limited resources. Information and Communication technology (ICT) had improved across the school but it was not used well to support and enhance learning. Most teaching across the school focused on increasing students' factual knowledge rather than improving their understanding and thinking skills.

Assessment was unsatisfactory in the Kindergarten and primary phases and acceptable in the middle and secondary phases. The school had assessment systems in place and it applied the assessment scales as prescribed by the CBSE curriculum. However, the teachers' understanding of formative assessment, how to apply it and make use of its information to modify teaching and the curriculum, were underdeveloped. Teachers rarely conducted reviews in lessons to check the levels of understanding of different groups of students and to measure their progress. Assessment information, which often came from summative testing, was not used to modify teaching to meet the different needs of all groups of students. Feedback to students about their work was lacking in most subjects and phases. Marking of students' work did not provide individual students with guidance on how to improve.

[View judgements](#)

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

The curriculum in Kindergarten was unsatisfactory because it was narrow and lacked balance. There was a gap in the transition stage from Kindergarten to Grade 1. At other phases it was acceptable and followed the requirements of the school's stated curriculum. There were adequate transition arrangements to ensure progression. The curriculum was reviewed annually. At primary level a new series of textbooks had been introduced which had had a small impact in helping to develop activity-based learning through digital media. Curriculum experiences in the lower phases were mainly knowledge-based and did not provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning or the development of higher order thinking skills, problem solving or investigative approaches. Cross-curricular links were not consistently integrated into lessons. Adequate

opportunities were provided for students to participate in environmental awareness programmes and develop community links. Students were actively involved in fund-raising activities. The Arabic as an Additional Language curriculum was not compliant with KHDA requirements at Grade 9.

Curriculum design was acceptable in Secondary and unsatisfactory in the other phases. The curriculum was based upon the CBSE framework. It did not have sufficient breadth to meet the educational and personal development needs of all groups of students. Low and high attaining students and those with special educational needs were not adequately catered for. It provided a few opportunities for the oldest students to pursue their learning, interests and aspirations, particularly at Grades 11 and 12. These students had a choice of science or commerce. There were limited planned visits outside of the school to provide opportunities for students to link their understanding to real life contexts.

[View judgements](#)

How well does the school protect and support students?

Policies and procedures to protect students were good in all phases. Arrangements for child protection were clear and staff had a well-developed understanding of their responsibility to keep the students in their care safe. School transport systems had been reviewed and had examples of effective practice. The buildings had been well maintained and the school had engaged with experts to develop good systems of evacuation, through regular drills. A comprehensive programme of curriculum activities to promote healthy living had been implemented. Students and children in the Kindergarten confirmed the positive impact of these activities. For example children in Kindergarten could explain the benefits of eating fruit. The school did not comply with the requirement to provide a full time doctor.

The quality of support for students was good in Secondary and acceptable in all other phases. Students in the secondary phase were provided with good advice when making choices about their future education and employment. Strong relationships between staff and students ensured that students participated confidently in lessons and sought support when they lacked understanding. Systems to promote attendance and punctuality were acceptable. Processes for identifying students with special educational needs (SEN) were understood but did not consistently lead to effective support in lessons. In some lessons, tasks were adjusted to take into account the individual needs of all students but this was not common practice.

[View judgements](#)

How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership was acceptable. The Principal and vice-principal knew most phases and aspects of the school well. They strongly supported the school's aim of providing a caring, supportive environment for its students, many of whom were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They were restricted in their effectiveness by a vision that did not include the improvement of educational outcomes. The lack of a senior manager with specific responsibility for Kindergarten and the lower primary phase had hindered improvement in these growing areas of the school. Currently too many young children were receiving an unsatisfactory quality of education. Senior management, supervisors and leaders of groups had not been successful in maintaining educational outcomes and in bringing about improvements as stated in the last DSIB inspection report.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were acceptable. The school had attempted to develop comprehensive and detailed school self-evaluation procedures. Most staff were involved in the process led by the Principal and his senior colleagues. However, documentation from key subjects was inconsistent. School data was not always accurate and not evaluated rigorously enough. Knowledge of students' levels of achievement against international benchmarks was insufficient. The improvement plan was generated from a limited source of information. The school had identified a few targets but did not specify time frames, personnel responsible or specific expected outcomes. There were few strategies to rectify gaps in learning. There was insufficient progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the previous inspection report.

Links with the parents and the community were good. Parents were supportive of the school and its senior management. A number of parents assisted the school in addressing the children's needs in Kindergarten. Communication with parents was generally good. Parents received regular notes from teachers in students' diaries and made appropriate use of telephone calls and monthly meetings with teachers. However, parents were not well informed about the courses offered by the school. Regular school reports gave parents clear information on their children's attainment, progress and learning. While parents were welcomed in the school they were not active in key decision-making processes. Most had little knowledge of the role and functioning of the school board of governors. A few links with the community had been established.

The quality of governance was acceptable. The governing board included owner's representatives, staff, past students and a few parents. However, it did not include a member of the wider community such as an educationalist from another school or higher education or a business representative. The board met three times each year. It received annual reports from the principal but did not regularly seek the views of stakeholders. It did not have a role in the school's strategic planning, self-evaluation or improvement planning. This restricted its knowledge of the work of the school and its ability to hold the school leaders to

account for the school's academic outcomes and other work. The board had not ensured that statutory requirements were met for the teaching of Arabic as an additional language.

Management, including staffing, facilities and resources was acceptable. The school ran smoothly. Most staff were suitably qualified and deployed. However, kindergarten staff had limited training in early years education. This had affected the quality of teaching and learning in that phase. The school was adequately equipped with necessary facilities such as science and computer laboratories and a home science laboratory. The library required upgrading to make it a more attractive place for students to research and learn. The provision of information technology across the school had improved but was not yet used effectively enough to support learning. Learning resources were barely sufficient to support learning.

[View judgements](#)

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

The school had an open door policy and welcomed students from diverse backgrounds including students with special educational needs. However, the special needs policy was not followed through effectively to ensure that students received well targeted support to enable them to make steady progress.

The school had identified some students with special education needs but others, such as gifted and talented students, had not been identified accurately. This affected the school's ability to provide well for them. Resources to support these students were limited. The individual education plans (IEPs) for students with SEN lacked specific learning targets. This prevented teachers measuring their progress accurately. During lessons, work was not matched well to students' needs resulting in unsatisfactory progress from their starting points. Although new staff had recently undertaken training in supporting students, there was no evidence of impact on students' progress. There were positive links with parents to exchange information on their children's progress.

What are the views of parents, teachers and students?

Before the inspection, the views of parents, teachers and senior secondary students were surveyed. Key messages from each group were considered during the inspection and these helped to form judgments. 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	1610	29%
	Last year	237	18%
Teachers	102		44%
Students	138		22%

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

The following statements were based on the survey response at the time of the inspection. The above response figures are the most up-to-date and accurate available prior to publication.

A minority of parents responded to this year's survey, almost double last year's percentage. A minority of teachers also completed their surveys. Most parents were positive about their children's progress in English mathematics and science. A smaller proportion had similar feelings towards progress in Islamic Education and Arabic as an additional language. Most felt that their children enjoyed life at school, were safe and that the school provided a good quality of education. A majority felt that their children could use a wide range of technology to support learning at school, and that the school listened to their many opinions. About a quarter of parents reported that their children received private tutoring. Teachers responded positively about almost all aspects of the school's operations.

What happens next?

The school has been asked to prepare and submit an updated action plan to DSIB within two months of receiving the most recent report. This plan 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 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

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