

# Emirates English Speaking School Inspection Report

Kindergarten to Grade 12

Report issued February 2010

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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.

Emirates English Speaking School, Jumeirah, was inspected in November 2009 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 Jumeira, Emirates English Speaking School is a private school providing education for boys and girls from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12, aged four to 18 years. The school followed a Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,160 students on roll. The student attendance reported by the school for the last academic session was acceptable.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau analysed responses to on-line questionnaires completed by parents. Parents were very happy with the school. Almost all parents agreed that their children liked school. They stated that their children were making good progress in all key subjects and that staff expected students to work hard and do their best. Almost all parents said that teaching was good and felt that their children were treated fairly and had a good range of activities. Almost all were comfortable approaching the school with a question or complaint and stated that they were consulted on decisions affecting their child, although over a third did not know if the school had sufficient links with the community. A few parents stated concerns about school transport and the lack of cleanliness of the student toilets.

## How well does the school perform overall?

Emirates English Speaking School, Jumeirah, provided an acceptable quality of education, overall. Inspectors judged the attainment in all key subjects to be acceptable, except for Arabic, which was unsatisfactory. By the end of KG most children could form letters correctly, use some English for communication and could count to 50. Although many students entered school with low attainment and little English, most had acceptable levels of attainment in most subjects by the end of primary school. Secondary results were in line with CBSE expectations. Attitudes and behaviour were good. Relationships were respectful throughout the school. Students were attentive in class and friendly to visitors. All staff and students demonstrated good respect for Islam and an age-appropriate appreciation of diversity within Dubai as a multicultural city. There had been several environmental initiatives and students had a strong sense of responsibility to the environment. Senior students had a clear understanding of Dubai's economic growth and contrasted it well with other countries.

Teaching and learning were acceptable overall, although too many lessons inspected were judged to be unsatisfactory, due to an over-reliance on a teacher-centred approach. Teachers had good subject knowledge, but many did not adapt their teaching methods sufficiently to meet the needs of all students. Students' positive attitudes to learning helped them make acceptable progress and their work was neatly presented and accurate. Students had limited opportunities to apply their learning to practical situations and to develop research and enquiry skills. There were clear records of termly assessment tests and teachers knew the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. An over-reliance on whole-class questioning and response prevented some teachers from evaluating students' understanding accurately, and so they were unable to plan for the full range of ability. The curriculum was unsatisfactory in KG and was acceptable in primary and secondary stages. Children in KG had limited learning opportunities, focusing on too narrow a range of literacy and numeracy skills. The primary and secondary curricula were based on CBSE practices and had a suitable breadth and progression. There had been little review of its effectiveness. The arrangements for the health and safety of the students were acceptable. Safety issues for the building and school transport had been reviewed and documented. Although there was a full evacuation plan, evacuation drills had not taken place recently. Child protection procedures were not formalised, but staff had positive relationships with students and provided support and guidance where necessary.

Leadership and management were acceptable. School leadership established a clear set of values and a commitment to students' development. However, a lack of self-evaluation and improvement planning reduced their impact on improving student attainment. Middle management posts established in 2008 provided a suitable structure for developing leadership throughout the school, although a lack of non-contact time limited the effectiveness of section and subject leaders in carrying out their roles. There was no advisory body in place. Resources were limited by school finances, but were just sufficient to support learning throughout the school.

## Key features of the school

- There were strong Islamic values throughout the school, with a culture of inclusion and mutual respect;
- There was a strong commitment to conservation and environmental preservation schemes and students had strong environmental values;
- Too much teaching did not focus sufficiently on student learning and did not plan for the full range of student abilities;
- Students were well behaved and courteous;
- There had been neither formal self-evaluation nor effective improvement planning processes;
- The school owner had little direct contact with the Principal and there was no advisory body.

## Recommendations

- Provide students with more extended and open-ended tasks that require independent learning and critical thinking;
- Broaden assessment methods to include tracking procedures and more targeted questioning, to provide feedback to individual students about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve;
- Conduct a regular review of curriculum, to enrich both content and delivery methods, including challenging and inspiring the more able students;
- Conduct regular fire drills;
- Implement a process of self-evaluation and planning for improvement at a whole-school and departmental levels, including the use of appropriate attainment benchmarks and ensure that the most effective teaching methods are used throughout the school;
- Establish effective governance for the school with representation from various stakeholders.

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

Attainment in Islamic Education was acceptable, while students' progress was good. Most primary school students could state the five pillars of Islam and narrate a few Hadiths in English. They could perform prayers, read verses from The Holy Qur'an with adequate accuracy and had basic knowledge about The Prophet's (PBUH) life. Most secondary school students were proficient in recitation and explanation of verses from The Holy Qur'an. A few had memorised The Holy Qur'an or large portions of it and led the prayers during Ramadan. They demonstrated good knowledge of the Sharia and the significance of verses and parables from The Prophet's (PBUH) life. Students lacked in-depth understanding of concepts and their application, but were aware of their responsibilities in the family and society.

Attainment and progress in Arabic were unsatisfactory throughout the school. Almost all students studied Arabic as a third language. Attainment was below expected levels across the school. The majority of students in Grades 1 to 6 were able to identify simple words and the appropriate sounds with the words. Most students in all grade levels struggled to apply basic grammar rules to

sentences. Almost all students' listening skills were below average across all grades. Only a few students were able to follow teachers' instructions in Arabic. In all grade levels, most students' spoken Arabic was limited to a few basic expressions. Only a few students could express their own ideas in Arabic.

In English, attainment and progress were unsatisfactory at KG, but in primary and secondary grades attainment was acceptable and progress was good. KG students could name and form letters correctly but had very limited oral English. Grade 2 students could identify synonyms. Students wrote in neat cursive handwriting by the end of Grade 3. Students in Grade 5 could write guided compositions with a fair amount of accuracy. By Grade 7 students used homonyms and idiomatic expressions in their writing. A minority of students could argue, summarise and present their opinions. Research and analytical skills were insufficiently developed in all grades. Secondary students understood appropriate literary and poetic devices and could write in narrative and non-narrative forms with correct punctuation and paragraphing.

The attainment and progress of students in mathematics were acceptable. A majority of primary students used the four arithmetical operations appropriately for their age. Grade 3 students could divide by single digit numbers. Grades 5 to 9 students were able to solve questions using formulae, but lacked the skills and understanding to apply these to real-life situations. For example, Grade 8 students knew how to use formulae to calculate the perimeter of a figure but could not define a perimeter and how it could be used. Most Grades 10 to 12 students were successful in solving geometrical problems and made some links to other subjects, including applying mathematical principles to economics.

Attainment and progress in science was unsatisfactory in KG and acceptable in primary and secondary. Children in KG had few experimental skills and many could not identify colours. Primary students used basic scientific terminology and understood some scientific aspects of the environment. Performance in examinations was better in biology and physics than chemistry. Secondary students used scientific language accurately and confidently in their written work and applied their mathematical skills well to scientific calculations. Grade 12 students solved circuit problems and measured circuits accurately. They knew how DNA was isolated and could describe the process of fragmentation and separation. Students understood how elements were notated and could manipulate chemical formulae to describe reactions. Students had not developed sufficient skills in scientific enquiry and investigation, but had an acceptable understanding of the relevant scientific theories.

## How good is the students' personal and social development?

The students' personal and social development was good. The students were polite and respectful towards adults and had good relationships with each other. Parents were contacted for persistent late arrivals and punctuality was good. The rate of attendance has fallen, caused by students visiting their home countries, but was still at an acceptable level.

The school encouraged a strong sense of civic responsibility. Students and teachers were proud of the inclusive values of the school and staff and parents spoke highly of its support for financially disadvantaged students. Prefects took a variety of responsibilities within the school and students

took part in several inter-school events. A camping programme had helped students develop independence and responsibility. There was a strong respect for Islam throughout the school. Staff meetings and daily assemblies began with Islamic prayers. Non-Muslim students were respectful of Islam and described how they would modify their own behaviour whilst their Muslim friends were fasting.

All students were able to describe the rapid development of Dubai and almost all were able to compare it with their own country. Secondary students understood the current global economic challenges as well as the job opportunities and competitive working environment in Dubai. The school implemented several environmental policies thoroughly, including avoiding the use of disposable plastics, saving water and stopping wastage of food. Students showed strong environmental values and were proud of their involvement in a 'clean up the world' campaign.

## How good are the teaching and learning?

The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in KG and primary but was acceptable in secondary. Teachers had good subject knowledge and delivered their lessons authoritatively. They prepared lessons in line with the content of the school curriculum. Lesson plans had stated learning objectives but these were rarely phrased in terms of what students were to learn. In the most effective lessons teachers used a range of stimulating activities which led to good progress in their learning. However, most teachers, particularly in KG classes and primary stages, did not plan work or activities that met the needs and aspirations of the full ability range of students. Too often the lessons contained little or no writing by students and group activities involving collaborative working were rare. Nonetheless, teachers managed students well and provided appropriate guidance when it was sought. The teaching environment in most classrooms was uninspiring and little or no use was made by teachers of information and communication technology (ICT). Most teachers did not routinely use overt praise to reward and encourage student contributions.

The quality of students' learning throughout the school was acceptable. Students were quiet, studious learners and listened attentively in class. They followed instructions from the teacher or the set books well and completed tasks on time, although in some classes little was offered to occupy those who had completed tasks quickly. Students' books showed work that was complete, neatly printed and accurate. In some lessons, students related their learning to real life situations but they were given too few opportunities to develop their skills in critical thinking or to apply previous learning to extended tasks or open-ended research. In the younger grades, oral responses to questions often revealed students' lack of clarity about what they were learning.

Assessment arrangements were acceptable. The school kept records of students' performance in examinations and used these to identify those who needed additional support with their studies. The school evaluated the performance of subjects from year to year, but did not evaluate their performance against relevant external benchmarks. Teachers knew the strengths and weaknesses of individual students and the school was beginning to evaluate their progress over time. However, teachers did not use the available student information to adapt their methods and resources to meet the full range of students' abilities. Some teachers used targeted questioning well to assess students' learning, but most relied on whole-class responses, which invariably meant that the progress of



individual students or groups of students was not checked. Marking of students' work was thorough but did not inform them how to improve and consisted mainly of ticks to indicate work was completed.

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

The curriculum was acceptable in the primary and secondary but unsatisfactory in KG. The KG curriculum provided adequately for letter formation and recognition, basic number work and some topic work. However, it addressed a limited range of aspects of language and mathematical development, and it offered no scope for activity-based learning. In primary and secondary, the CBSE framework provided appropriate progression and a suitable breadth of subjects, including arts, music and sports. Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and French provided a good choice of languages. Science and commerce streams were offered in the secondary school. There was little curriculum review beyond following changes in the prescribed syllabuses. Because of this, insufficient attention had been paid to developing the curriculum to meet the needs of all students and little additional challenge was provided to extend the most able students. The school provided additional lessons for students with learning difficulties, but there was little modification of classroom teaching to address specific needs. Subjects were mainly taught in isolation, although students applied their mathematical skills in science. The school ran several events and celebrations, but these were not integrated with classroom instructions to enhance learning. The curriculum was extended through extra-curricular activities such as science exhibition, elocution, cookery, art and quiz contests, and students took part in athletics, cricket and basketball competitions. However, there was little use of the local community for field trips. Alumni were included effectively in careers counselling.

## How well does the school protect and support students?

The quality of protection and support of students was acceptable overall. The school site was secure. Students felt safe and knew they could approach teachers if they had any problems. All school buses had safety measures such as seatbelts and fire extinguishers in place, and arrangements for arrival and departure were well organised. The school premises, furniture and environment were neat, clean and hygienic. All classrooms were sufficiently large, well lit and ventilated. Although fire equipment had been installed and evacuation procedures were in place, there had not been a fire drill for several years. There was a suitably-equipped clinic with a qualified nurse. A doctor visited the school twice each week. The school promoted healthy lifestyles effectively through assembly lessons, classroom teaching and display boards. Students were taught, for example, which foods were necessary for good health and thus were sensible choices. Teachers and school administration showed significant personal care and supervision for their students, but there was no formal child protection policy in place.

Staff-student relationships were respectful and supportive. Staff provided advice, support and guidance for students who required it. The school staff recognised the academically weak students and supported personal development. There was rudimentary monitoring and tracking of students' overall academic progress through regular assessment of students' work and exam scores. Parents



were informed about their children's overall and academic progress along with any improvement required. The school recorded attendance and punctuality accurately and took corrective action whenever a student was persistently late or absent.

## How good are the leadership and management of the school?

The quality of leadership and management throughout the school was acceptable. The Principal and section leaders were strongly committed to the students' success and well-being. The Principal had a passion for his work that encouraged others to also work hard. School leadership had a strong commitment to students and all organisational aspects of the school were well-managed. The school had a clear sense of mission and purpose. Staff, students and parents shared an appreciation for the school's role in the community, including the support for financially poorer families, a sense of environmental responsibility and the development of students' character. This was enhanced by good relationships throughout the school, underpinned by a Principal who had a caring, pastoral attitude towards students he knew individually. However, there was insufficient ambition for making significant progress in raising attainment over the coming years. There had been significant development in the teaching of some subjects, most notably English, but many areas of learning had seen little development. A vice principal and supervisors were appointed in 2008, providing a structure that allowed more distributed leadership. A lack of management training and release time from teaching limited their effectiveness. However, there were clear job descriptions for these posts and their holders were committed to their work.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning were unsatisfactory. There was no formal process for self-evaluation or systematic planning for improvements in learning. Examination data was collated and used to identify individuals in need of additional support, but it was not analysed systematically to use in school improvement planning. There was some monitoring of teaching by the Principal, but other senior staff were not fully involved. Peer evaluation had been used in previous years, but had not taken place recently.

Partnership with parents and community were acceptable. Each term parents received written reports on their children's progress and could attend 'open house' days to meet teachers. The school contacted parents promptly whenever particular concerns arose. Parents spoke highly about how they were welcomed to the school, the open access to the Principal and teachers, and how their comments were heard. There was an active parent teacher association whose function was mainly social. Although parents made few contributions to the school's educational programmes, several contributed to the school's financial support programme. The school took part in several community competitions and environmental projects.

Governance was unsatisfactory. The school's owner had little direct role in the life of the school beyond monitoring and advising on significant financial decisions. There was currently no advisory board.

Staffing, facilities and resources were acceptable. The school had sufficient and suitably qualified staff. Deployment was generally effective, although some senior staff had insufficient time to develop their leadership roles. School premises had enough space to accommodate all classes, but there was little space available to extend programmes. The building was adequately maintained, but

somewhat drab in appearance. Classrooms were quite bare and did not provide attractive or stimulating learning environments. The use of ICT was limited to nine computers in a computer lab, and there was little impact of technology on most students' learning.

## 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:	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Good	Good

How good are the students' attainment and progress in Arabic?			
Age group:	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Progress over time	Not Applicable	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory

How good are the students' attainment and progress in English?			
Age group:	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good

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

How good are the students' attainment and progress in science?			
Age group:	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Attainment	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable
Progress over time	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

How good are teaching and learning?			
Age group:	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Teaching for effective learning	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable
Quality of students' learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the curriculum meet the educational needs of all students?			
Age group:	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Curriculum quality	Unsatisfactory	Acceptable	Acceptable

How well does the school protect and support students?			
Age group:	Kindergarten	Primary	Secondary
Health and safety	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Quality of support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

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

How well does the school perform overall?
Acceptable

## Next Steps

The school has been asked to prepare an action plan indicating how it will address the main findings of the report, and to share that plan with parents. The next inspection will report on the progress made by the school.

Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau  
Knowledge and Human Development Authority

## How to contact us

If you have a concern or wish to comment on any aspect of this report you should contact:  
[inspection@khda.gov.ae](mailto:inspection@khda.gov.ae).

More information about Dubai Schools Inspection Bureau can be found at [www.khda.gov.ae](http://www.khda.gov.ae).