



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
Education First **التعليم أولاً**



Inspection Report

Abdulla Bin Al Zubair Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 15

Iqraa

Abdulla Bin Al Zubair Private School

Inspection Date	13 – 15 October 2014
School ID#	223
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	148
Age Range	3 to 12 years (KG1 – Grade 7)
Gender	Mixed
Principal	H. Fatih Adak
School Address	Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 768 0551 / +971 (0)3 768 0553
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Official Email (ADEC)	Abdullazubair.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	abzschool.com
Date of last inspection	18 – 20 February 2013

The overall effectiveness of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A High performing (overall effectiveness grade 1, 2 or 3)

Band B Satisfactory (overall effectiveness grade 4 or 5)

Band C In need of significant improvement (overall effectiveness grade 6, 7 or 8)

The School was judged to be:	BAND C;	GRADE 7
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the rapid improvements made by new leadership and management since very recently joining the school
- the owners' commitment, support and investment in the further development of the school
- the pride the students have in their school and their enjoyment of school life
- the positive and supportive relationships established between adults and students that generate a culture of care and safety
- the school buildings which are spacious, clean, well maintained and fit for purpose.

The main areas for improvement are:

- improving the attainment and progress students make in all subject areas and particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy
- implementing externally standardized assessments to identify the needs of all students, track their progress and inform lesson planning
- raising the quality of teaching so that the needs of all students are met
- enriching the curriculum by providing more opportunities for investigation and creativity and a programme of extra-curricular activities
- increasing the quality and quantity of educational resources in the classroom to enhance the curriculum.

Introduction

The school was inspected by a team of 3 inspectors. They observed 44 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject and stage co-ordinators, students and parents. They scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed the 54 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The owner, principal and academic co-ordinator were involved throughout the inspection process and 6 joint lesson observations were conducted.

Description of the School

Abdulla Bin Al Zubair Private School was established in Al Ain by the present proprietor with the aim of seeking a unique, creative and active learning environment where children are provided with opportunities to enhance their learning needs. The current principal was appointed in September 2014. He has appointed a new curriculum co-ordinator, social worker, school nurse and 6 English speaking members of the teaching staff.

There are 148 students: 100 boys, and 48 girls; 35 children are in the kindergarten and 123 are in Grades 1 to 7. Almost all students are Muslim. Most have a common Arabic heritage and represent 12 nationalities, of which 81% are Emirati. Other students originate mainly from Oman, Syria and Egypt.

Students' families live and work mostly within the school locality. Students are admitted after a meeting with the principal. No baseline or diagnostic assessments are carried out before entry to the Kindergarten (KG) as the school is non-selective. There is 1 student identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and 73 have difficulties with the English language. The curriculum for English, mathematics and science is based on the National Curriculum for England and Wales (ENC).

School fees are in the affordable category and range from AED 13,000 in the foundation stage to AED 21,000 in Grades 1 – 7 which are in the medium category. Additional charges are made for school transport, in-school resources and uniforms.

Teaching staff are all qualified and originate from a variety of heritage backgrounds; around a third was newly appointed at the start of this academic year. There are 4 board members including the proprietor.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

Abdulla Bin Zubair Private School is in need of significant improvement as it provides a very unsatisfactory standard of education. The attainment and progress of students are unsatisfactory in the subjects taught in Arabic, very unsatisfactory in English, mathematics and science and poor in information and communications technology (ICT). This is due to very unsatisfactory teaching and a lack of the resources necessary to implement or enrich the curriculum. The school has developed a positive ethos towards the care and support of students; they enjoy learning and are respectful to adults and their peers. Students are acquiring a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the values of the UAE. The accommodation is well maintained and fit for purpose. New leadership is providing clear strategic direction for school improvement but has not had sufficient time to make significant impact on the quality of education.

Students' attainment & progress

The attainment and progress of students in all grades is unsatisfactory in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies and is very unsatisfactory in all other subjects. Standards remain well below those in both similar schools and international age-related expectations.

On entry to the KG, children's developmental skills are broadly average. Little progress is made in literacy or numeracy during the 2 years in the Foundation Stage (FS). Teachers' expectations are too low and there are few child-centred approaches to learning. During this stage, children learn a limited number of letters in Arabic and English and they can count to 10. These skills are often taught through the repetition of songs and rhymes. There are limited opportunities to learn through free or structured play activities.

In Grades 1 to 7, reading and writing skills in Arabic are lower than age related expectations. Although they are able to speak Arabic in a clear voice and can use imagery and explicit gestures to enhance meanings, students' use of grammar is particularly unsatisfactory. Students have a basic knowledge of the concepts of Islam; they understand these and can apply them to real life situations. They have more difficulty in accurately applying the recitation rules of the Holy Qu'ran. Students have sufficient knowledge of the culture and values of the UAE; they are unable to build on this prior learning in order to accelerate their progress in social studies.

Most students have very basic communication skills in the English language when they enter the school. By the time they reach Grade 7, many speak English with

some confidence and can hold conversations. Their reading and writing skills are well below the age related expectations of English as additional language speakers. In mathematics and science, learning activities are driven by worksheets and these are often not age appropriate and do not build on prior knowledge. Students' progress in ICT is very unsatisfactory due to the lack of facilities. There are few opportunities to investigate, explore or develop creative skills in any subject.

There is no centralized record of assessments undertaken by students during the previous academic year. This term, all students have undertaken baseline diagnostic tests and the results are currently being evaluated using an external assessment framework.

Students' personal development

The personal development of students is satisfactory. They are respectful of each other and relationships between students and adults are generally warm and supportive. Students co-operate and they usually demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in the classroom. Outside lessons, students are polite and sensible. They speak positively about the caring ethos of the school.

Opportunities for developing confidence and leadership skills are improving; for example, by leading assemblies and participating in the newly formed Students' Council. During assemblies, healthy lifestyles are emphasized and students are developing a good practical understanding of the value of eating healthily and daily exercise.

Attendance and punctuality have also improved and the attendance rate is currently 95%, which is above average. Students are developing positive attitudes towards the culture and values of the UAE. This is promoted through assemblies, the curriculum and celebrations such as those held for National Day in the past.

All students are offered a programme of studies in the core subjects at the end of the school day and this has been organized to reinforce learning. There are a few opportunities for students to play football after school. There are no extra-curricular activities to enrich the scientific, cultural or technological curriculum.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies is unsatisfactory and in other subjects is very unsatisfactory. Teachers are committed to their students and keen to improve the quality of their teaching. In the KG, teachers do not have a sufficient understanding of how young children learn and develop. In Grades 1 to 7, teachers of English, mathematics and science

do not have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the ENC and require further professional development.

Teachers do not plan collaboratively, and as a result, lesson objectives and planning are not sufficiently related to prior learning. Lesson objectives are often not age related and are not understood by students or assessed against learning outcomes at the end of each lesson. Planning is not sufficiently rigorous and activities sometimes end abruptly because they are not appropriately timed. In some lessons, the learning activities and resources are inadequate and do not motivate or interest students. Prolonged questioning by teachers often slows the pace of lessons.

In all grades, teachers lack the skills to meet the needs of different groups of students. Lessons do not provide challenge for the very able or support the needs of the less able. There is an over reliance on learning by rote and students are not given the opportunity to work independently, investigate or think critically. They are able to memorize facts and vocabulary but cannot apply their knowledge to new contexts.

The quality of marking in students' books is generally unsatisfactory. There are few comments made by the teachers that could help students to improve their work.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum implementation is very unsatisfactory and does not meet the needs of all students or prepare them adequately for their futures. In the KG, there are few opportunities for children to be creative or make choices about their learning activities. Learning often consists of single and whole class activities. In Grades 1 to 7, Arabic, Islamic education and social studies follow the MoE curriculum and the time allocation for these subjects is now compliant.

The implementation of the ENC is very unsatisfactory. Teachers do not have the expertise to plan or deliver this curriculum. Curriculum maps are now in place but do not meet age-related expectations. A range of ENC textbooks is used to deliver the curriculum. The knowledge, understanding and skills intended to be developed through this curriculum are not met by these books.

The curriculum offered is broad, including French, art, music and PE. In these lessons, students are rarely provided with the opportunity to practise the skills necessary for life in the 21st Century. Students lack the skills necessary to solve problems, analyse, be creative or undertake investigative work. For example, in art, teachers over direct the activities and students are not able to work creatively or demonstrate originality. Due to the lack of resources, there is no cross

curricular work using ICT and opportunities for students to develop ICT skills are limited.

The curriculum is not adapted for those with special needs or the more able. There are no extension activities for high achievers and teaching often lacks pace and challenge. There are few visits or links with the community to enrich the curriculum.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students are satisfactory. The school has a caring environment and students say they enjoy school, like the teachers and feel safe. Students acknowledge that behaviour is usually good and incidents of bullying are rare.

The school has established child protection, behaviour and pastoral care policies. These have been implemented and staff have been trained and are clear about procedures. Appropriate checks are made regarding the suitability and qualifications of staff and these are kept on a central file. The school clinic is clean and fit for purpose. A nurse has recently been appointed and she is establishing appropriate medical procedures and a system for keeping records.

The newly appointed social worker has improved the monitoring and tracking of student behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning and has established a student record system on each. Procedures for care and support do not address the needs of students with SEN. There is an appropriate prayer room. The school site is secure.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings are clean, well maintained and fit for purpose. Accommodation is spacious, except in the KG where classrooms are not sufficiently adapted to support a curriculum that enables free play. The environment is light and airy. One floor is unoccupied and has the capacity to support an increased student population. Health and safety checks are routinely undertaken and security is satisfactory. All hazardous materials are stored safely. The provision of toilets is adequate for the ages and the number of students, except in the KG.

Since the last inspection, outdoor facilities have been improved. For example, there is a new shaded KG playground, shaded assembly area and a newly grassed football pitch. A swimming pool is under construction.

The school's resources to support its aims

The provision of resources is very unsatisfactory in all grades and does not adequately support the aims of the school. Teachers are sufficient in number, qualified and speak English sufficiently well to deliver the curriculum. Classes are unusually small; the average is 9 students. There are few classroom assistants except in the KG.

Students' work is not routinely displayed in classrooms and the environment is not stimulating. Only 3 classrooms have 'data show' facilities and these are not used effectively except in the 1 classroom where English is taught. The science laboratory is not equipped and this facility is not currently used for science. The school library is not well resourced; there are few books and no ICT stations where students can undertake investigative work. The ICT suite has insufficient workstations and this facility would not accommodate larger classes. There are few resources in the KG classrooms that support free or structured play, investigation, reading or exercise.

School transport is maintained adequately.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management is unsatisfactory. The newly appointed and experienced principal is beginning to have a positive impact. The newly appointed senior leader, subject co-ordinators and social worker have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They have not had sufficient time to significantly improve the quality of teaching or raise academic standards. Management structures and operational procedures are now in place and the school is better organized and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Senior leaders and staff are committed to the school and understand the need for rapid and sustained school development. A governing body has been convened to oversee the current investment in facilities and resources and ensure that this is adequate to support and enrich the curriculum. The self-evaluation form (SEF) and school development planning (SDP) are overly positive and are currently being updated.

Parents, students and staff are positive about the improvements made under the new leadership. Staff say that there is now a clear sense of purpose and they are working together to bring about the required changes. They are now paid on a regular basis. Parents are appreciative of the open door policy; they remain concerned about unsatisfactory standards of attainment. They have no formal methods of communicating with the school, such as a Parent's Council, but they say that their suggestions and opinions are taken seriously.

The principal has a clear understanding of effective teaching and learning and monitors the quality of teaching on a daily basis. Feedback is provided to teachers though there is no formal performance management system. There is a weekly programme of professional development for teachers to help them improve their skills and understand the curriculum. This has not yet had an impact on their practice or academic standards.

A system of diagnostic baseline assessment has been implemented and performance data is currently being analysed so that this can inform standards and progress more accurately. The school is working with external agencies to develop expertise in assessment and curriculum planning.

Progress since the last inspection

There have been considerable changes and some improvements since the last inspection. A permanent principal has been appointed with the experience necessary to develop and improve the school rapidly. A Governing Body has been formed which meets monthly. The principal has made some significant staff appointments to support the required school improvement initiatives and a weekly staff training programme is in place.

The personal development of the students has also improved. Students enjoy school life and have an enhanced understanding of the culture and values of life in the UAE. The curriculum in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies is now compliant with ADEC regulations. Behaviour in lessons and during break times has improved and school attendance has risen significantly. There are more opportunities for students to take responsibility, for example, in the new Students' Council.

New procedures in pastoral care have enhanced the protection, care and support of students. Child protection, behaviour and pastoral policies have been drafted, shared with staff and implemented. The new social worker actively supports behaviour management and the number of instances of poor behaviour has reduced.

The school has very recently demonstrated a determination to improve. There is the potential for rapid, further improvement. The school has not established the embedded capacity to sustain further improvement without external support, particularly with regard to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Provide further external support for the leadership so that school improvement is rapid and based on accurate self-evaluation informed by rigorous performance management.
2. Raise standards and accelerate progress in all subjects so they are in line with international standards by:
 - i. implementing a system of externally standardised assessments to monitor attainment and progress against international benchmarks
 - ii. ensuring that teachers use attainment data to plan learning activities that meet the needs of all students
 - iii. improving teaching and learning by providing targeted training to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and understanding required to deliver the National Curriculum of England and Wales.
3. Ensure curriculum implementation provides appropriate breadth and balance by:
 - i. enriching the curriculum with a programme of activities which extend students' cultural, scientific and sporting experiences
 - ii. providing students with opportunities to develop their higher order thinking, investigative and creative skills.
4. Develop the quantity, quality and range of resources in the classroom by:
 - i. providing more access to ICT in the classroom, for students and teachers
 - ii. increasing the number of books to support all core subjects and the equipment necessary to enhance learning in science, PE, music and in the KG.

Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
Performance Standard	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory & Improving	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Poor
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Standard 1: Students' attainment and progress								
Standard 2: Students' personal development								
Standard 3: The quality of teaching and learning								
Standard 4: The meeting of students' needs through the curriculum								
Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students								
Standard 6: The quality of the school's buildings and premises								
Standard 7: The school's resources to support its aims								
Standard 8: The effectiveness of leadership and management								
Summary Evaluation: The school's overall effectiveness								