



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



New School Inspection Report

Abu Dhabi Island International Private
School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

iqraa

Abu Dhabi Island International Private School

Inspection Date	18 – 20 May 2014
School ID#	239
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	83
Age Range	3 to 12years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Hassan Sabbah
School Address	P O Box 222201, Eiddan El-Ridda, Al-Towaya, Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 722 7666
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Official Email (ADEC)	adisland.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of opening	1 September 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 B;	GRADE 5
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The main strengths of the school are:

- effective systems and processes have enabled the school to make a successful start
- the principal is highly regarded and motivates staff, students and parents
- effective teaching is promoting progress, particularly in English, mathematics, science, social studies and information and communication technology (ICT)
- a caring approach is developing students with positive attitudes who are keen to learn.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the need to provide high quality standardised tests and strengthen assessment processes for tracking students' progress and providing feedback on their work
 - development of the role of middle leaders and providing them with training in leading for improvement
 - the need to strengthen the professional development programme paying particular regard to differentiation strategies to enhance the learning of both lower and higher attainers
 - the deficiencies of the building, providing shading for the field, specialist accommodation for music, physical education (PE) and play-based, independent learning space for kindergarten (KG).
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 3 inspectors. The inspectors observed 46 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior leaders, the owner, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results and scrutinised students' work across the school. They considered the 38 responses to the parents' questionnaire and many of the school's policies and other documents. The director was involved throughout the inspection process and engaged in joint lesson observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

The school opened in September 2013 in a new building. It is solely owned by the current proprietor. The Board consists of the owner, the principal (who is referred to as the director) and another member who is an educationalist. The school's vision is to *'provide its community high quality education in a safe and secure environment, espousing equal opportunities for all, tolerance, respect for differences and the promotion of national identity.'* It also defines its mission, core values and goals.

Of the 83 students, 52 are boys and 31 girls. There are 35 children in KG and 48 students in grades 1-5. 97% of the students are Muslim and 96% are of Arab heritage. The majority of students, 67%, are Emirati. The other main nationalities represented are 16% from Jordan, 4% from Palestine, 4% from Syria, 4% from the USA, 3% from KSA and 2% from Oman.

Of the 5 students identified as having special educational needs (SEN), 4 have moderate learning needs and 1 has speech and language difficulties.

Of the 10 teachers 3 are from the USA, 2 from Canada, 3 from Syria, 1 from Palestine and 1 from Jordan. In addition, there are 2 teaching assistants, a counsellor, a nurse and 6 administrative staff.

The fees range from AED 15,000 in KG1 to AED 21,000 in grade 5.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

The school conducted diagnostic tests of students' attainment on entry. These indicate that most students were below expected standards, particularly in English, when the school opened. Assessment data and students' work show that they have made rapid progress in this first year, in English, mathematics, science, social studies and ICT. Attainment is now in line with international standards particularly in mathematics and science. In ICT, attainment is above expected levels. In Arabic, students' attainment and progress are in line with expectations. This is also the case for attainment in Islamic education where the rate of students' progress is increasing.

In English, students' speaking skills are developing well. They are encouraged to speak spontaneously to their teacher and each other through, for example, the use of talk partners. Throughout the school students are improving their writing skills through structuring effective sentences and paragraphs. Their handwriting and presentation skills are not as well developed. In addition, skills in deciphering unfamiliar words are still relatively weak because knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not used as a decoding strategy systematically enough in all grades to give students the necessary 'word attack' skills they need to make satisfactory progress in this area.

In mathematics, students are acquiring a secure grasp of number skills. Some teachers are accelerating progress in this area through regular well-paced mental math sessions. They are also developing students' skills in tackling word problems related to real life.

Some exciting work is accelerating progress in science. Students explore science through experimentation and are acquiring understanding of the concept of a fair test. Grade 2 students, for example, found out through testing that substances may change shape but their mass does not. Grade 4 students are able to test for acidity and base substances. These and other activities are developing students' thinking skills effectively.

In Arabic, students recognise their letters and can write simple words. In grade 5, students can speak and read standard Arabic. Their extended writing skills are less well developed. Students' understanding of Islam and its moral precepts is increased by the extra focus on their religion through assemblies and the modeling of prayer. By grades 4 and 5, students have acquired an age-appropriate understanding of their faith. They have also developed appropriate social skills.

In ICT, students are developing skills in using the suite of basic Microsoft programs, including the use of Excel spreadsheets to interpret for example, survey data, in line graphs, bar and pie charts. Gross motor skills of KG children and the physical education (PE) skills of other students are underdeveloped owing to lack of facilities.

The school is not yet using external standardised tests. Appropriate plans are in place to use the American Measures of Academic Progress (MAPs) tests next year. Internal tests are well founded on the Ohio State Standards but are not sufficiently standardised, or ‘calibrated’ against student progress measures to ensure full reliability.

Students’ personal development

The school has a positive tone. Relationships are warm and encouraging throughout. The students feel safe. Their behaviour and attitudes are good. Students’ confidence is growing through the encouraging atmosphere and the learning opportunities provided for them. Different nationalities mix well and respect each other’s cultures. Students have an appropriate understanding of the traditions and values of the UAE. They sing the national anthem with enthusiasm in assemblies. Students have appropriate understanding of the importance of hygiene and healthy eating. This is reflected in the content of their lunch boxes. Students’ punctuality is good, with almost all arriving promptly to school. Attendance, at 93%, is above average. At present students do not have enough opportunities to engage in enrichment activities beyond the taught curriculum. They also lack opportunities to lead and undertake responsibilities, For example, there is no student council and students are not taking leadership roles in activities such as recycling or supporting charities.

The quality of teaching and learning

Students say how much they enjoy lessons and are supported by their teachers. The students want to learn, and they participate with enthusiasm in lessons. Routines and expectations are well established. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and understand how to teach their subjects. They use the Ohio State Standards effectively to increase expectations and accelerate progress. Objectives are clear in most lessons but are not often used to review learning during or at the end of lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use a range of appropriate strategies to interest students and extend their learning. In a grade 5 social science lesson, for example, a good writing frame, coupled with research, helped students describe how climate and environmental features are reflected in the customs and beliefs of different countries.

Teachers ask questions which push students to think, and draw on previous understanding to connect with and integrate old with new learning. In English, teachers provide students with the tools to extend their writing, such as through techniques to sequence a story. In grade 2 English, the teacher used a 'cause and effect' strategy well to enable students to identify key points in a text. This helped extend students' speaking and comprehension skills. Talking partners are used appropriately to encourage sharing of ideas. The KG teaching assistants help students by, for example, actively supporting learning in learning centres. In some lessons, there is not enough challenge for higher attainers, who find work relatively easy and have to wait for others. Occasionally too, more support is needed for lower attainers and SEN students. At times, teachers over-explain and leave too little space for students to think and speak. Self and peer assessment is underdeveloped. Teachers' marking does not help students understand how they can improve.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum is appropriately planned around the American Ohio State Standards. Teachers use these effectively to focus lesson objectives. The curriculum provides an acceptable breadth and balance at this stage in the school's development. Interesting activities in the subjects taught, including art and social science, motivate students. The curriculum effectively develops students' understanding of UAE value and culture. The KG curriculum provides appropriate focus on developing basic learning and social skills.

Opportunities for younger children to learn through play and independent activities are largely missing. In this respect there is more to do to provide a curriculum whose breadth is fully in line with international expectations. Currently, music is not provided. PE is provided but is limited by lack of appropriate facilities. Extra-curricular activities are also limited. Some extra activities were provided early in the year but were discontinued in the trimester during which the inspection took place. Appropriate plans are in place to make good these shortfalls in the next academic year.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has established a strong ethos of care. Students say they feel safe and well supported, and their parents agree. A child protection policy is in place and staff have been appropriately briefed in its implications. All staff are thoroughly vetted. The counselor and nurse provide effective support for students. As well as helping individuals, they provide personal, social and health awareness sessions for students. The emphasis on the spiritual and moral aspects of Islam helps students see how prayer can sustain them in their lives. The director models this

well by praying with the students. The support for SEN students is not fully developed. Procedures to follow up on students' absence are appropriate. Attendance is above average.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The new building is bright, clean and well maintained. Good displays of students' work enhance the impact of the accommodation. They effectively illustrate students' skills and the progress they are making. Security is diligent. As well as effective security guards, the school has installed CCTV cameras in key areas. Classrooms are generally of appropriate size. Where numbers are larger in younger grades, the rooms are somewhat cramped, and do not provide the extra space needed for learning corners. The specialist accommodation includes a prayer room, library, ICT suite, art room and multi-purpose room used for indoor PE. There is no music room, gymnasium or canteen. The lack of a science laboratory is not adversely affecting science learning. There are sufficient classrooms to accommodate 600 students. Outside, there is sufficient shading for assembly. The field area, on which there is a large climbing structure, is currently unshaded. In addition, the school does not have a lift to provide disabled access. The owner plans to provide the specialist rooms, a canteen and extra outside shading for the next academic year.

The school's resources to support its aims

The teaching staff are well qualified. American teachers provide good modelling of spoken English which aids the students in pronouncing words with appropriate emphasis and intonation. The ICT suite is well used to develop students' skills. Teachers integrate ICT skills appropriately with work in other subjects. This is helpful in accelerating students' understanding and confidence. Most teachers use the interactive whiteboards (IWBs) well to stimulate students' interest. Material resources in classrooms are at generally acceptable levels. There are limited manipulative resources for mathematics. Resources for KG independent play-based learning are lacking, as are those for music, PE and sport. Currently, the school has no SEN teacher or specialist resources to support the needs of these students.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school has made a successful start in its first year of operation. Effective systems and processes are in place to provide suitable conditions for learning. The director is highly regarded and motivates all members of the school community, including parents, students and staff. He has a realistic vision and high expectations for the school and provides clear strategic direction. This is reflected in the key priorities of the school development plan. He is assisted by an

effective administrator who deals with student support and discipline, a counsellor and a teacher in development to take on an additional leadership role. These arrangements are appropriate for the school at this early stage of development. There are no subject leaders at present and a more developed leadership structure will be needed as the school grows.

The director's evaluations of teacher effectiveness show a good level of accuracy. A formal performance review system is not yet in place. Data analysis is not yet being used to best effect to track progress and identify weaknesses in learning. Teachers contributed appropriately to the school self-evaluation form. Some opportunities are provided for teachers to observe their peers. More of these are required to enable teachers, including both American and Arabic teachers, to share strategies to ensure a consistently high quality of teaching. Parents who responded to the questionnaire are very appreciative of what the school provides. A supportive parents' council is in place. Its role is not yet fully developed. The school has established some links with external organisations, which could be developed further.

Capacity for further development

The school has made a successful start and has established the preconditions for further effective development. The owner shows real vision and commitment to making the school one of the best in Al Ain. He has plans for a KG – G12 building on the site in the final stage of awaiting ADEC approval. This will provide the extra specialist accommodation, such as science laboratories, gymnasia, swimming pool and other accommodation, which can be used by both schools. The owner is fully supportive of the director and is ready to provide the extra resources required to support the school's growth. As well as material resources, this includes the staffing required to cater for the doubling of student numbers in the next academic year. Appropriate plans are in place to extend the Board with parents and university representatives. The director is also making effective arrangements to provide the middle leaders required in a growing school. Overall, the school shows clear capacity to develop successfully.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Strengthen assessment processes by:
 - i. providing high quality standardised tests and using them to track students' progress
 - ii. enabling teachers to calibrate their internal assessment and test results to increase reliability
 - iii. marking students' work regularly and providing them with feedback on how to improve.
2. Build the school's leadership structure by:
 - i. developing the role of middle leaders
 - ii. providing them with training in how to support and challenge teachers to contribute to school improvement.
3. Strengthen the professional development programme by:
 - i. focusing on differentiation strategies to support lower attainers and provide extra challenge for higher attainers
 - ii. enabling teachers to share and model strategies with each other to improve the consistency and quality of teaching.
4. Address building deficiencies by:
 - i. providing shading for the field
 - ii. increasing specialist accommodation – for music, PE and independent play-based learning in 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								