



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



New School Inspection Report

Ajyal International School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

iqraa

Ajyal International School

Inspection Date	27 – 30 April 2015
School ID#	249
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	577
Age Range	3 years 8 months to 14 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	John Taylor
School Address	Mohammed Bin Zayed City, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 552 2668
Fax Number	-----
Official Email (ADEC)	Ajyalint.pvt@adec.ac.ae ; John.taylor@ajyal.sch.ae
School Website	Ajyal.sch.ae
Date of opening	10 th September 2014

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:

- the state of the art building; its modern facilities and high-quality resources
- the progress made in establishing a new school with a whole staff commitment to the core purpose of learning
- almost all lessons have clear learning intentions and harmonious relationships
- good academic progress in UAE social studies
- the involvement of teachers in the self-evaluation and school development planning
- devolved leadership capacity through effective learning managers.

The main areas for improvement are:

- teachers' expertise to cater for the needs of students who speak English as an additional language (EAL)
 - the behaviour of a small group of boys in the playground
 - the variability in the quality of marking
 - consistency in lessons that take account of the full range of students' needs
 - the deployment of teaching assistants and their impact on learning, particularly in KG
 - establishment of wider partnerships and extracurricular activities to enhance the curriculum
 - provision of forums to take account of the views of parents, students and teachers
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 72 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, middle leaders, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed progress data, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed the 61 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal, deputy principal and academic director from the operator, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) were involved throughout the process and conducted 13 joint observations of lessons with inspectors.

Description of the School

Ajyal International School is a new school, which opened on 10th September 2014. It is located in Mohamad Bin Zayed City, Abu Dhabi. The school's aim is 'to be an international school, meeting the needs of the expatriate community and the Emirates, offering a high quality education and providing UK curricula for boys and girls from Pre-K to grade 12'.

The student population is 577: 60% are boys, almost all are Muslim and of Arabic heritage. The majority of the students are Emirati nationals (77%) and other main groups are: Egyptian (3.5%), Jordanian (2.8%), Nigerian (1.8%), Saudi Arabian (1.6%) and Yemen (1.6%). There are 226 children in Kindergarten (KG), 249 students in grades 1-5 and in grades 6-8 there are 102 students. There are 2 classes each in grades 2-8 and 3 classes in Grade 1. From Grade 6 onwards there are separate classes for boys and girls. Grade 9 will be introduced next year, continuing year-on-year until 2018/19 when the school will admit students up to grade 12. The school follows the 2014 National Curriculum for England (ENC). The Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum is used in Arabic, Islamic education and UAE social studies.

The school has identified 7 students with special educational needs (SEN) including 1 with moderate learning difficulties, 3 with behavioural difficulties, 2 with speech and language and 1 with spina bifida; 6 further students with behaviour issues are in the process of being identified. In addition, approximately 26 students experience problems accessing the curriculum due to English language difficulties. The school has not yet identified any students as being gifted and talented (G&T). The admissions policy is open, in line with ADEC guidelines. Students complete a baseline cognitive ability tests (CAT) and have an interview in Arabic and English. The school will only reject students if they cannot meet their special needs.

The principal took up post in April 2014, prior to the official school opening. The leadership team comprises the principal, deputy principal, 3 learning managers responsible for KS3, KS2 and KG, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) and the SSAT Academic Director. A pastoral deputy principal is not yet in post.

There are 53 teachers. The fees range from AED 26,500 for KG to AED 44,500 for grade 8, which are in the premium category.

The Effectiveness of the School

Ajyal International is a satisfactory school. This judgement is a reflection of a new school at the start of its journey. The leadership team has created an ethos and shared commitment to improvement. It has speedily put in place systems and procedures to help the school run smoothly. All aspects of the school are satisfactory with the exception of buildings, and resources which are both good, and leadership and management which is satisfactory and improving. The new premises, modern facilities and high quality resources provide a good quality, safe learning environment, conducive to learning.

Students make satisfactory gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding, as well as developing the ability to work collaboratively. This is because harmonious relationships are evident in almost all lessons and students clearly understand what they are learning. Progress is restricted in some lessons because teachers do not always take account of the full range of students' needs, particularly those who speak English as an additional language (EAL).

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. The attainment of students in English and science are below age related expectations, in line in Arabic, mathematics, and information and communications technology (ICT) and just above in Islamic education and social studies. Progress is never less than satisfactory across all subjects and is satisfactory and improving in Islamic education, and good in social studies. Students are making some progress in developing 21st-century skills through the Significant Learning Model (SLM); this is a method for teachers to integrate assessment and planning.

Children's skills when they first enter school in KG are about those typically seen for this age in physical development, personal, social and emotional development and in communicating. Most do not speak English as a first language. The school implements a successful focus on immersion in the English language, which enables communication skills to develop. They make at least satisfactory progress

during their time in KG, so attainment is around age related expectations for EAL speakers.

Standards in Arabic are satisfactory, and in line with curriculum expectations. Most students are able to listen, read adequately and use standard Arabic effectively. They can also comprehend texts and answer questions to enrich their vocabulary, but their writing skills are not as well developed. Non-native students place more importance on learning the Arabic language than many native students, as shown in their enthusiasm during lessons. In Islamic education, attainment is slightly above curriculum expectations and students are making satisfactory and improving progress. For example, in Grade 1, students are able to recognise the different bounties of Allah, and in Grade 3 they are able to distinguish between good and bad deeds. Older students are not able to read the Holy Qur'an accurately by employing the 'Tajweed' rules. Students make good progress in social studies, particularly when they are given opportunities to research. For example in Grade 5, students were motivated by their research about the countries that constitute the GCC.

Almost all students speak EAL. Their English skills are below international expectations because of weaknesses in their writing skills. Their progress in English from low starting points is satisfactory. Their speaking, listening and inference skills are improving as they are able to talk about texts with increasing confidence and growing levels of analysis. Students do not regularly write at length; they do not use a wide enough range of sentence construction or vocabulary and their grammar and spelling are not always accurate. ICT across the school is developing well, because students have opportunities to use the many resources, including iPads in lessons and many homework tasks use 'Google classroom'.

Children in KG have an acceptable level of basic skills in numeracy; they can count and solve simple numerical problems. Across the school, attainment in mathematics meets age related expectations and progress is satisfactory. Opportunities to apply skills, solve problems, research, collect and make effective use of data to present findings are too few and limited in scope. In science, students make satisfactory progress from low starting points as students have had little previous investigative experience. Younger students carry out simple experiments with teacher guidance, whilst older students are able to understand the applications and implications of science in their everyday lives and can communicate effectively using scientific terminology.

The school has developing systems in place to track academic achievement and highlight students who are making insufficient progress. The school has devised

its own assessment methodology to identify students who are ‘emerging’, ‘engaging’, ‘established’ or ‘excellent’, which is useful in measuring the progress of individuals. The school does not yet make systematic use of this information.

Students’ personal development

Students’ personal development is satisfactory. They have positive attitudes to learning, most appear to be confident and enjoy school life. Students are mostly polite and well mannered towards adults. Girls’ behaviour makes a good contribution to their learning; boys’ behaviour is satisfactory. This is because a small minority of older boys show a lack of respect for other students. Some get into physical fights at break time and this makes some students in lower grades feel unsafe. Students take leadership roles as house captains but these new roles have not had time to develop. The school council has not yet been set up so the impact of the student voice and opportunities to develop leadership skills are limited.

Students respect the values of the UAE. They are proud of their heritage and have an understanding of the different cultures represented in the UAE. Students are satisfactorily developing moral viewpoints broadly in tune with their own cultural backgrounds. Students take part in celebration days and visits to places of cultural interest. They make a positive contribution in class and to their community, for example in considering the environment. Students have a practical understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives. Attendance is average at 92%.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The large majority of teaching was deemed to be at least satisfactory, and a small minority were judged good. The more effective lessons were mainly in English, mathematics and science. The impact of teaching on student attainment and progress is variable depending on how well teachers take account of the range of student needs to personalize their learning and provide effective challenge. Teachers do not always consider students’ EAL needs sufficiently well. Those with SEN do not always receive the help they need because support staff are not effectively deployed.

Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is good. Classroom relationships are a positive feature in most lessons, because teachers maintain mutually respectful and encouraging relationships. Students in turn have mostly positive attitudes to learning resulting in productive lessons where academic progress is made. The effectiveness of managing behaviour can be variable, particularly in boys’ classes in the upper grades.

Teachers in KG are developing an understanding of how young children learn through play and initiating their own activities. Good relationships enable children to settle and feel secure. Tasks are age-appropriate, but at times lack challenge or enough underlying structure to develop skills further. Learning intentions feature in almost all lessons and are shared with the students so that they know what they are learning. There is not enough awareness of how well these have been achieved. Questioning is used regularly to check students understanding, but does not sufficiently promote higher order, critical and creative thinking. Students have opportunities to work together collaboratively. Their independent learning skills and curiosity in asking questions are not well developed, despite a focus in teachers planning on the SLM. The quality of marking is variable. It does not always provide useful guidance for students to improve their work or encourage them to reflect on their learning. Students are unaware of the targets they should be reaching.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is satisfactory; it is broad, balanced and relevant. The curriculum is planned to promote progression and personal development and is effective in motivating students. The curriculum in KG meets the children's needs and broadly covers all the areas of learning. Students are particularly engaged and interested in the non-core subjects such as ICT, art and design technology, which are taught by specialist teachers. Teachers in grades 1 to 5 effectively use integrated approaches to the curriculum through projects. Curriculum plans have been developed which show regard to all groups of students; in practice, these do not always support rapid progress and challenge in classrooms.

Opportunities for extracurricular activities, trips and visits to enrich students learning are limited. A range of extracurricular enrichment opportunities linked to learning and built around the school specialisms are planned for next year. Wider partnerships to enhance the curriculum and to prepare students for the next stages of their education are in development. Projects focusing on the Arabian Gulf and globalization provide appropriate opportunities for students to learn within the context and culture of the UAE.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students are satisfactory. The ethos of the school towards the care of its students ensures that concerns relating to students are aired in weekly support meetings. There is a clear pastoral system for providing support, which sustains students' academic progress and personal development. Student know who to go to if they feel unsafe.

In KG, children's behaviour is generally positive with no apparent instances of disruption or anxiety. There are appropriate procedures in place to deal with bullying. Weaknesses in the supervision of students at break times indicate that more could be done to protect students from bullying. Some students do not have confidence in the school's ability to prevent it from re-occurring. Students contributed to reviewing the behaviour policy, which outlines rewards and sanctions related to the house points system. Not all staff consistently follow the behaviour policy.

There is a clear child protection policy in place. All adults have been trained and have signed to say they are aware of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding. Guidance was also provided to students, so that they know who to go to for help. All staff are rigorously checked before appointment. A high priority is given to site security, which includes numerous security cameras. The quality of first aid facilities are good. Arrangements ensure that injuries are dealt with swiftly. There are good facilities for male and female students to pray and opportunities are given during the day. Plans to provide appropriate careers guidance are in place.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The quality of the school's buildings and premises are good. The 'state of the art' building with its modern facilities is spacious, clean, hygienic, well ventilated, light, bright and airy. The high quality facilities for specialist subjects such as design technology, music and ICT enable the school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. They make a good contribution to the enjoyment of learning.

Displays in some classrooms are limited and not engaging for students. Not all available areas in KG are used for free flow activities. All policies, procedures and drills to keep the site secure and safe are appropriate. A fire evacuation during the inspection alerted the school to an issue with the air extraction system in the stairwells. All electrical and safety equipment is tested and all chemicals and hazardous materials are securely stored.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school's resources make a good contribution to supporting its aims. There are sufficient, qualified and competent teachers. The ratio of teachers to students is good in almost all classes. Facilities for science and the quality of ICT resources are very good.

The school has a plentiful supply of ICT resources in 6 specialist rooms, the library and in classrooms. The library is an inviting space that is used well but has a limited number of books. The librarian has a clear rationale to improve the

quantity and quality of both physical and e-books. The accessibility and use of resources does not consistently support learning in all KG classes. Not all teachers use the high-quality resources well to support the different academic needs of students.

The areas for the storage, preparation and consumption of food are hygienic. The school's procedures to ensure safe transport are appropriate.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The leadership team has made good progress in establishing a new school with a whole staff committed to the core purpose of learning. The school has devolved leadership capacity to the effective learning managers. Strategic direction is focused on priorities and is effective. A board of trustees has been established with the owner's representative as chair, and they hold senior leaders to account well. It plans to invite a parent and teacher to be part of the board. They are objective, supportive and keen to improve.

Leaders and managers have a satisfactory understanding of the quality of education and the school's key areas for improvement. The self-evaluation form (SEF) contains appropriate evidence to support mainly realistic judgements. Staff SEF committees involved all teachers in the self-evaluation process. The associated school development plan (SDP) identifies the current priorities for improvement with timescales, review dates, responsibilities and costs and is an effective working document. The tracking of trends in student progress, behaviour and punctuality is not as well developed due in part to the delay in implementing the school management system (iCampus).

Professional development has had a whole school focus and some teachers feel that it has not met their needs adequately. There has been some sharing of good practice and working together in teams. Performance management is not yet fully in place and teachers do not have agreed targets, but formal lesson observation has taken place. The results of these are not yet linked to personalised professional development.

Parents are largely supportive. Meetings with an informal group of parents have taken place to gauge parental concerns and support and there is regular communication between teachers and parents. More needs to be done to ensure the views of parents, students and teachers are taken into account in the decision-making process.

Capacity for further development

The leadership team, with the support of the whole staff, has laid solid foundations. They are aware of what needs to be done and are adept at taking effective actions, albeit one step at a time, due to the limited capacity of the small team. The owners' representative is supportive and understands the school is at the start of its journey. Leaders at all levels are well qualified and experienced and demonstrate good capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve standards and progress by:
 - i. raising expectations to ensure students fulfil their academic potential
 - ii. embedding the use of the SLM to improve students' independent learning and critical thinking skills
 - iii. strengthening the deployment and impact of teaching assistants on learning, particularly in KG
 - iv. setting challenging student targets to accelerate progress and ensure students understand them.
2. Improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is good or better by:
 - i. delivering lessons that take account of the full range of student needs, particularly speakers of EAL
 - ii. ensuring marking consistently provides useful guidance for students to improve their work and encourages them to reflect on their learning.
3. Improve the behaviour of students, particularly older boys, by:
 - i. ensuring all the teachers consistently follow the behaviour management policy
 - ii. increasing the effectiveness of supervision at break times across the whole site.
4. Improve the impact of leadership by:
 - i. ensuring that suitable mechanisms are in place to monitor and track trends in academic progress, behaviour and punctuality
 - ii. ensuring the views of parents, student and teachers are taken account of in making decisions
 - iii. linking formal lesson observations to professional development.

5. Continue the development of KG provision to enhance learning by:-
 - i. providing more guidance for all staff about the learning intentions of activities
 - ii. ensuring greater accessibility of resources for children to self-select and make choices
 - iii. making more use of areas around KG including corridors, to provide more 'free flow' activities.

Inspection Grades

Performance Standard	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
	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								