



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Adhwa Private School

Published in 2013

Iqraa

Al Adhwa Private School

Inspection Date	20 th – 23 rd May, 2012
School ID#	130
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	American
Number of Students	853
Age Range	KG – Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Makarim Mobarak
School Address	Al Ain – Falaj Haza's, PO Box 64997
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Introduction

The school was inspected by four inspectors. They observed 68 lessons, and conducted 19 meetings with staff and students. They considered the school ethos and the quality of teaching, students learning experiences and progress, personal development and the resources to support them.

Description of the School

Al Adhwa opened in 1994 in purpose-built accommodation on one site. There are several other schools in the immediate area, but no residential buildings. The school aims to provide quality education for students at all levels in Al Ain. Its mission is 'to educate students to their highest potential, to focus on overall individual improvement, to hold an inclination to learning, to demonstrate respect and care for the universe, and to develop a better sense of respect to every individual'. The curriculum is American for English, mathematics and science, with MoE-approved Islamic studies, Arabic and social studies.

The school is divided into four sections. There are 225 students in kindergarten (KG), 405 in primary grades, 141 in middle grades, and 82 in the upper grades. There are 429 boys and 424 girls. Currently 27 students are identified as having special educational needs, including: specific & moderate learning needs; behavioural; speech & language needs; hearing, visual & other physical disabilities and hyperactivity. Students come from many different countries. 46% are from the UAE, 10% from Oman, 10% from Egypt and the remaining 33% from 10 different Arab countries, the United States and others. Over 95% are Muslim. All but one of the 52 teachers come from outside the UAE. The principal joined in September 2011.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged Al Adhwa Private School to be in need of significant improvement.

The principal has a clear vision for the future direction of the school and her assessment of its current overall effectiveness, though subjective, is broadly accurate. Senior leaders have secured the commitment of middle managers and teachers towards fulfilling this vision and all staff have been involved in identifying the next priorities. This level of collaboration is indicative of the principal's inclusive approach and members of the school community recognise that it has had an impact on improving the quality of the students' behaviour as they are all more supportive of one another. Unfortunately, there is no documentary evidence to substantiate this. The collective approach to school evaluation has

not resulted in the level of objectivity required to generate incisive improvement plans. They lack the rigour required to drive change because they do not clearly identify the relevant actions and responsibilities. The absence of effective management systems to secure consistency in the application of the curriculum or in the quality of the teaching means that the impact of the plans on improving standards is slow. Consequently, the school has an unconvincing capacity for improvement.

SAT data indicates that students' performance is below international standards in English while in mathematics students achieve the minimum level required. Overall, students are only developing limited skills and knowledge in the core subjects. Typically, teachers convey basic knowledge and require only simple responses from students and this restricts the extent of their learning. For example, teachers do not include mental mathematics activities in lessons so students are not challenged to develop their reasoning skills. Students resort to their calculators too quickly so they do not understand fundamental mathematical principles. They are able to follow mathematical methods but this is because they have memorised the process rather than understood the underlying concept. Students do not have the mathematical vocabulary to enable them to tackle word based problems confidently. Consequently, numeracy skills are weak. When drawn into a conversation, a few students are keen to talk in English, but lessons rarely feature activities that promote oracy and literacy so students do not build up extended writing, thinking and speaking skills. Expectations are particularly low in Arabic classes so standards are lower than in English. The social studies course provides students with an adequate awareness of the values of the UAE. Students acquire the basic facts and principles of Islam but they are not given any opportunities to reflect on the way these teachings apply to their own lives. Students have few opportunities to engage in practical activities in science and are therefore not developing the required skills or an understanding of the scientific approach of observing, hypothesising and testing.

Senior leaders have begun to analyse test scores and these indicate that girls consistently outperform boys. Girls are more inclined to listen during lessons and follow instructions. Boys are not sufficiently inspired by the prevailing methods for learning. This has yet to be addressed effectively because guidance offered to overcome these issues has been too general to make an impact. Although students who find learning more difficult are given some support through brief withdrawal sessions they make unsatisfactory progress because not enough is done to meet their needs in ordinary lessons. Similarly those who may be gifted or talented are not extended and fail to reach their potential. Most students make slow progress in their creative development because overcrowding in the art

room and a lack of resources for music mean that students are not encouraged to be imaginative or creative.

Students generally respect one another. They demonstrate a due regard for the values of the UAE both during assembly and in their social studies classes. Students of different nationalities get on well together but some boys can become over boisterous at break times and this leads to unruly behaviour. A number of projects have been introduced to help students increase their awareness of their responsibilities to themselves and their communities. The police have visited so students understand about safety in the neighbourhood and about healthy eating healthier. They appreciate that unhealthy options were removed with the vending machine. Unfortunately, the unhealthy options, such as chips in the canteen undermine this policy.

Teachers and students in the vast majority of classes share warm, respectful relationships so students generally display a willingness to learn and they mostly participate well in class. They enjoy practical and interactive learning but report that this takes place too infrequently in lessons. When teacher talk dominates lessons then students, mainly older boys, can become restless and disrupt lessons. Teachers display appropriate subject knowledge. They write lesson objectives on the board at the beginning of each lesson but these are often just the tasks to be covered. Few teachers use objectives effectively to make students aware of what they should know and be able to do as a result of the lesson so that both teachers and students can judge the success of learning that has taken place. There is not enough interaction in class to enable teachers to evaluate the progress students are making. Teachers do not adjust their teaching to respond to students' difficulties. They often step in too quickly to provide answers before students have had a chance to really consider their own response so students are not developing resilience in learning or the ability to think more deeply. Most teachers have no grasp of how to use group work to encourage students to investigate, solve problems and learn independently. When group work was observed, it involved simple tasks such as cutting and pasting shapes that did not lead to independent and confident learning. Teachers are beginning to prepare worksheets for learners at different levels within their classes but this system is unsophisticated and as yet ineffective. More able learners are tasked with completing more of them than their peers so there is not enough intellectual challenge for them to make better progress.

Senior leaders are developing the curriculum to include pacing guides that provide logical progression across the year. The curriculum is reasonably balanced but there is not enough breadth to extend students' learning. There is little to engage students in lessons as teachers rely on the text book and the associated work

books. Assessment is not aligned to curriculum outcomes and therefore does not enable students' progress to be effectively monitored or provide information to assist in reviewing the curriculum. An additional skill-building program has recently been introduced in mathematics, so that the school can begin to monitor students' attainment and provide feedback on their progress but it is too soon for this to have had a measurable impact. The KG curriculum includes a range of different activities including singing, drawing and manipulating that support practical learning but these activities are not sufficiently closely related to literacy and numeracy so students progress in these areas is slow. Options for grade 10 – 12 students are modest; students can choose business, including accounting and economics, or science classes in physics, chemistry and biology. The school has made some positive changes to the curriculum since the last inspection, and extended the information and communication technology (ICT) programme so that it now runs from KG through to grade 8 to introduce and build ICT skills. Students in grades 9 to 12 learn about the theory of programming but these changes have not been sufficient to promote students' research skills or their ability to integrate ICT tools in their other subjects as a means of organising and interpreting their ideas. Since there are no formal measures in place to review the curriculum, there are no immediate plans to address the deficiencies.

Several improved extra-curricular activities were added this year, including trips to museums, academic competitions and sports events. The principal has taken two groups, boys and girls separately, on camping trips. The school has also introduced a student council with elected representatives from grades 7 to 12. These types of activities are beginning to have an impact on the students' level of commitment to the school and wider community. For example, more students are committing to the recycling initiative in school and to fund-raising activities for local charities.

The school relies on its caring ethos to provide for the well-being of its students but this approach is not supported by robust policies to ensure that staff are diligent and supervise students consistently well. Students voiced concerns that during break time there is some pushing and shoving, especially when the queue for the one small canteen window is long. Arrangements for students travelling on the buses are not well managed and students do not use seat belts. The social worker presents general 'care' topics in class and accompanies and assists students in grades 11 and 12 when they visit careers fairs. These students are also able visit universities to help with their decision-making. This general support, available at key times during the students' time at school, is not complemented by effective ongoing support for individual students. The progress of those who find learning difficult is monitored but subsequent plans to help them are not sharply

focussed enough to ensure they make better progress. The nurses in the licensed clinic handle day-to-day issues and dispense medication efficiently.

The school buildings are safe and adequately maintained. Provision for the KG classes is on the ground floor. These students are escorted safely down the few steps to an indoor area which is well equipped for assembly, physical education and play. This area has no air conditioning so temperatures are often too high for students to sustain physical activity and this means that the curriculum is compromised at certain times of the year. A separate outdoor play area for older students is inadequate for the number of students in the school, and little equipment is available for independent play and recreation. The school has plans for a new multi-purpose function hall that would include a gymnasium and a stage area for large assemblies, meetings and ceremonies. The classrooms are generally large enough to enable active approaches to learning to be used. This is not the case in the appropriately equipped science laboratories where a lack of space inhibits effective practical work. This problem is compounded by there being too few laboratories for the number of students.

There are adequate technological resources in each classroom. Some teachers use 'data shows' and a whiteboard to introduce brief clips or videos to support the lesson and make learning more interesting. Typically, the technology is used simply to transfer a worksheet or other printed material to the board and is not effective in supporting interactive and investigative learning. In KG classes, teaching methods are more skilful and the equipment is used to encourage students to become involved in learning by singing, clapping, and dancing. Other classroom resources are limited mainly to textbooks and workbooks, although teachers reported that if they needed particular resources for a lesson, especially science, the school would provide them. The textbooks are pitched at average ability levels and little is provided to meet the needs of lowerability or gifted/talented students. The use of textbooks fails to provide students with activities to reflect, think deeply, investigate or solve problems. The scope and sequence of lessons are pre-determined at the start of the year, with a pacing guide that takes no account of students' previous learning.

Leaders and managers are committed to improving the school but none of the prerequisites for successful change are in place. Members of the board are supportive but do not demonstrate the levels of involvement necessary to engender more effective improvement. The school has inadequate systems to measure students' progress, and analyse data in order to modify what is taught and provide support where it is needed. The school generated tests are not standardised and therefore do not enable comparisons to be made either with national or international standards. Subject coordinators still have a full teaching

commitment so they are not able to devote the time necessary to ensure the consistency with which initiatives are implemented. The exception is the English coordinator who does have a generous allocation of time to improve the quality of the language used in the school. However, without the clear responsibility structure that holds managers and teachers to account, she is not made answerable for the pace of change which is too slow. The vice principal has a sound understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, but this expertise has not been deployed effectively to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and so bring about the changes urgently needed in the classroom. Not enough has been done to ensure that the extensive professional development that has been undertaken is actually making a positive difference. The school is developing potentially useful links with local schools. These include hosting events, such as a textbook convention and some peer lesson observations. These have yet to make an impact. The owner's representative has responsibility for the KG and has ensured that this area of the school is well resourced. Senior leaders have begun to encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. A new parents' council has been set up. Regular weekly meetings are also organised for parents who are invited to come into talk informally with the principal about concerns. These arrangements are contributing to the parents' positive view of the school but are yet to have an impact on school improvement. Fees are within the expected range for similar schools. Given that standards and progress are below expectations and the quality of teaching is inadequate, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management by:
 - i. training middle and senior staff so that they can contribute to and effectively implement the agreed school improvement plan (this should include training in monitoring the work of teachers in classrooms and in ways of supporting developments);
 - ii. holding them to account for their areas of responsibility; and
 - iii. providing subject co-ordinators and other leaders with time to manage their departments, monitor the effectiveness of provision and full fill their responsibilities.
2. Raise the quality of teaching by:
 - i. improving teachers use of questioning in lessons in order to promote students' reflection, higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills;
 - ii. ensuring there is effective differentiation in lessons, particularly to ensure that the least able students have the support they need and the most able are challenged to reach their potential through extended, challenging activities; and
 - iii. reducing teacher-directed time during lesson, and increasing students' involvement and engagement through active, investigative learning.
3. Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum by:
 - i. using standardised tests to assess the strengths and weaknesses in students' learning and to then modify what is taught; and
 - ii. ensuring that planning for all grades includes clear, measurable learning outcomes based on activities to promote interactive learning, investigations, reflection, and higher-order thinking as well as the delivery of the required knowledge.