



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



Inspection Report

Al Ain English Speaking School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

iqraa

Al Ain English Speaking School	
Inspection Date	22 - 25 September 2013
School ID#	132
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	1071
Age Range	3 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Mike Smith
School Address	Khalid Bin Sultan Street, Schools District, PO Box 17939, Al Ain, UAE
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 767 8636/7
Fax Number	+971 (0)3 767 1973
Official Email (ADEC)	alainenglish.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.aaess.com
Date of last inspection	28 – 31 May 2012

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 4

The main strengths of the school are:

- effective school leadership that is constantly driving for further improvement
- students make good progress in English, mathematics and science
- procedures for pastoral care and students' good personal and social development, particularly that of the girls
- the school's broad and balanced curriculum and the wide range of additional activities
- teachers are knowledgeable and they plan lessons that meet the needs of almost all students.

The main areas for improvement are:

- students' progress in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies
- standards and progress in writing in the primary school
- the range and quality of resources to support subject development and learning, particularly in ICT
- the high rate of teacher turn-over to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching
- provision of a designated room for Muslim students to pray.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 6 inspectors. The inspectors observed 80 lessons plus break times, extra-curricular activities, assemblies, registration procedures and the arrival and departure of students. The inspectors held discussions with staff, students and parents, both formally and informally. They also reviewed samples of students' work, teachers' planning, policy documents, school assessments and examination outcomes. Inspectors considered the school ethos, the quality of students' learning experiences, personal development, progress and the quality of teaching. In addition, 182 responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school were analysed.

Description of the School

The Al Ain English Speaking School (AAESS) originally opened as a primary school in 1978 and moved to its current site in 1982. The school follows the English National Curriculum, catering for students from 3 to 18 and includes Arabic language, Arabic Social Studies, and Islamic Studies (for Muslim students). The organization of the school replicates that of a British school, having an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), containing Nursery and Reception Year children, as well as primary, secondary and sixth form sections.

The school Board contains the owner's representative, along with a member of the school's advisory group, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) as well as the Principal.

The school population is multinational and serves 57 different nationalities. 20% of students are Emirati, 22% are from other Arabic speaking backgrounds, 17% are from the UK and 9% from the USA; the remaining 32% come from a variety of countries including South Africa, India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and Ireland. 52% of students are Muslim and 30% are Arabs. There are approximately 630 students in the primary section and 440 in secondary. The gender balance is almost equal but with slightly more boys than girls. 52 students (5%) are currently registered with special educational needs. The school's complement of teachers is also multinational comprising 47 different nationalities, the majority from UK and South Africa.

School fees range from AED 19,734 in EYFS to AED 29,532 at the top of the primary section, AED 36, 432 at the top of the secondary section and AED 39, 468 in the sixth form. These are in the premium school fee range. The school takes part in internally assessed Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) in the primary section and is recognized by Edexcel and Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) for IGCSE and A level examinations.

The Effectiveness of the School

The last inspection identified four key areas for development. The school has made good progress towards meeting the recommendations of the previous inspection. The exception to this is ‘analysing and using data to inform planning so that the needs of more able students are taken into account’.

Students’ attainment & progress

While standards reached by students at the end of key stages vary, they are satisfactory overall and improving. Many of the youngest students enter Nursery at age three with language and personal skills below those typical for their age. By the end of Reception Year, students have made good progress to reach standards that are average or close to average. At the end of Key Stage 1 students make good progress to meet expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics at Level 2. At the end of Key Stage 2 student attainment is below expected levels but progress is satisfactory. This is because about three quarters start school speaking English as an additional language. In 2013, Year 6 students made satisfactory progress in writing, but good progress in reading and mathematics. The 2012 GCSE results improved from the previous year and were above standards achieved by similar students internationally. The relatively small number of A-level (Advanced Level) students achieved good standards in 2012. Examination results show a rising trend over the last four years. There are inconsistencies in the progress made by some students and in some subjects. In particular, progress in writing is slower than expected in both Key Stage 1 and 2. Attainment and progress in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies are below that of other subjects. In Arabic it is unsatisfactory for both first and second language speakers.

Students’ personal development

Students’ personal development continues to be good from the time of the last inspection. This is particularly so for girls where it is very good; the personal development of boys is satisfactory and improving. Students are provided with opportunities to make informed leadership decisions through election of prefects and members of the School Representative Council. This is in line with the school’s goal to develop a strong and active student voice. Students are afforded opportunities to develop self-confidence and make informed decisions about what happens in their school or the wider world. This is evident through their continuing commitment to charity work like supporting an orphanage in Nepal and raising money to fight breast cancer. More than fifty different nationalities live together as a harmonious community within a well-defined and caring school ethos. Students say that they like school and that teachers are approachable when help is required. Older students describe the higher education guidance to be excellent. There is little misbehaviour and if this occurs, it is addressed quickly and fairly. Attendance levels are high and punctuality is good. The

school provides students with a good understanding about how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles and teachers work closely with parents to achieve this. Students respect the values of the UAE and non-Muslim and non-Arab students demonstrate a good understanding of the culture and history of the UAE. As a result of the positive progress they make in the development of skills and personal qualities, students are well placed to face their future confidently.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is highly variable, ranging from very good, notably in secondary science, to very unsatisfactory in Arabic. Teachers know their subjects well and are explicit in what students need to learn. Very good classroom relationships are created and in most age groups teachers have a very secure knowledge of learning objectives as well as a good understanding of the needs of their students. As a result of well-planned lessons, students are motivated to learn and remain engaged for lengthy periods. They often find lessons interesting, which is reflected in their concentration levels and their good classroom behaviour.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) very effective teaching enables young students to make choices and initiate their own learning under close adult supervision. In the primary section, classroom assistants provide very good additional support, adding value to students' learning, particularly for those with special educational needs or students whose first language is not English. The teaching of writing is not always effective in the primary section, resulting in slower progress being made by students than in other skills. Assessment for learning is generally a consistent and positive feature in lessons whereby activities are matched to ability, based on students' prior learning.

In a minority of lessons and for students in EYFS, work for more able students lacks challenge or stimulation, resulting in slower progress for this group. Feedback in the form of marked work is generally a consistent feature of the best lessons, alongside well-directed peer assessment. Through these strategies students are able to gauge how much progress they are making. Effective assessment and feedback are not always the case, particularly in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies. In a minority of lessons, particularly in Arabic, the pace of learning is too slow because teachers talk for too long, restricting opportunities for students to use and apply their skills or knowledge. In Arabic expectations are too low, learning objectives are often not clearly explained and opportunities for active learning are limited.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum implementation is good because it successfully promotes students' learning so that they make good academic progress in most subjects as well as in their

skills and personal development. Key subjects are well provided for in terms of timetabling, within a broad and balanced curriculum. All students gain significantly from an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, visits and trips, which enrich their school experience. Enrolment to these activities is high and both students and parents say how much they appreciate them as part of the school's curriculum. The needs, ability and interests of most students are well met, which extends to ensuring that all students have an understanding of the development of the UAE and its history. Students learn about healthy lifestyles and understand the importance of applying these to what they have learned. The cafeteria provides fresh, healthy food for students to enjoy and increasingly they are choosing to eat healthy options. The availability of high quality sports facilities, resources and coaches have a very positive impact on engaging students and in developing their skills. The curriculum provides music, drama and art and around the school examples of accomplished two-dimensional art can be seen. From an early age, students are encouraged to find out about the wider world. This can be seen in the availability of the enrolment onto the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, residential visits and fund raising activities for charitable organisations. Students moving to higher education say they feel well prepared.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care guidance and support of students are good. The school benefits from a positive pastoral care system, which provides a strong contribution to the overall ethos of personal development and wellbeing. The child protection policy is effective and all staff have received training in child protection issues. They are highly alert to students' health, safety and wellbeing and home to school communication in this matter is clear. A detailed and fair behaviour management policy is in place, which staff, students and parents understand and it provides a detailed system of rewards and sanctions. The school has consistent and successful systems to record attendance, which contributes to high attendance and punctuality. Concerns about student absence or tardiness are quickly followed up with parents by administrative staff. Students that are new to the school say that they feel welcome and helped by their teachers. The clinic provides clean and caring accommodation for students who are ill and is visited on a weekly basis by a local doctor to assist staff in their work. A Health Authority Abu Dhabi inspection took place recently and found the clinic to be 'perfect'. Academic guidance has improved to challenge students and accelerate progress.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school's buildings and premises including facilities for physical activity and indoor practical activities are good. They provide a safe environment and make a good contribution to students' academic progress and educational enjoyment. The indoor

sports facilities and swimming pool provide students with many regular opportunities to participate in vigorous, competitive and recreational exercise. The school building is very clean, well maintained, safe and it caters for those students who require disability access to the upper floor of the secondary school. Corridors are wide, unrestricted and enable safe movement around the school. Classrooms are generally bright and spacious, fit for purpose, with adequate lighting, ventilation and cooling. While the accommodation is well suited to the age requirements of students, there are too few toilets available for primary age students. The EYFS facilities are particularly effective in supporting the learning of the youngest students. Specialist facilities for science, music, ICT and art are good. The school also benefits from an expansive, modern cafeteria in which students and parents congregate during the day. The school grounds also provide a range of shaded areas in which students are able to meet, socialize and play. The clinic is clean, well equipped and medicines are kept secure. External security is consistently good and there are no obvious risks to student's health or safety. A clear maintenance plan is in place and electrical equipment is tested regularly. The school does not have a designated prayer room in which Muslim students can pray.

The school's resources to support its aims

The resources of the school are satisfactory but improving. Well qualified teachers are matched to the courses and ages they teach and the teacher/student ratio is good. Their capacity to teach is enhanced by well-judged professional development that has close association with teachers' performance targets. The school has invested well in classroom assistants. They are an extremely valuable resource and they provide good additional support for students. There has been an increase in the number of library books available to students since the last inspection, although texts to support students learning Arabic and Islamic culture remain limited. Despite having adequate numbers of computers for students to access, most are situated in computer suites and students access these through timetabled lessons. Beyond this, there are few opportunities for students to use computer technology on a regular basis within subjects or classrooms, and this limits the impact of ICT on students' progress. Most subjects have a satisfactory range of resources and these are maintained in good condition. In EYFS there is a good range of resources to meet a broad range of early development needs.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory and improving. In a short period of time the Principal has created a supportive, caring and achievement driven culture based on teamwork and cooperation. The senior leadership team has been effectively restructured to include a Vice Principal to focus on quality and

standards, and a Head of Primary and a Head of Secondary to oversee each of the major phases. Middle leadership has been strengthened, with subject or phase leaders having a clear brief to actively engage in the school's improvement agenda.

A major goal this year has been to raise staff expectations about student achievement and to accelerate progress that has been partially successful. Rigorous accountability has been introduced through a new structure of target related staff performance management, led by Heads of Department or Heads of Year. Teachers are regularly observed in their work by senior leaders and provided with constructive feedback. These developments have strengthened leadership across the school, improved communication and embedded monitoring procedures. These measures have not raised standards at the same rate in those subjects taught in Arabic.

Parental views endorse the changes and they are very supportive of the school and its mission. Parents expressed the highest satisfaction with: the care students receive, the quality of teaching, and how happy their children are at school. A significant minority of parents expressed some concern regarding: the way the school deals with any infraction of discipline, how highly the school values parents' opinions, and how effectively the school helps those students who find learning difficult. The day-to-day administration of the school and financial management are good. The proprietor frequently meets with the Principal and has a good understanding of the school's priorities and expenditure. While careful husbanding of resources has taken place, to improve standards and accelerate progress in some subjects, an increase in resources is now required. Senior leaders understand that keeping good teachers is also a major priority, and they were able to explain their plans to improve teacher retention.

With the new leadership in place and rigorous self-evaluation occurring at all levels of the school's practice, the capacity of the school to improve further is good.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in: strengthening senior leadership, broadening the curriculum; improving the quality of the buildings and premises; and improving care by ensuring that all child protection regulations are adhered to and safe recruitment checks are undertaken. To make significant further improvement the school needs to ensure that standards in Arabic, Islamic and Social studies are in line with attainment across the rest of the school, and that the academic needs of the more able are catered for effectively.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - i. applying rigorous assessment for learning strategies to accurately inform planning so that work is closely matched to the ability of more able students
 - ii. ensuring lessons in Arabic, Islamic and Social Studies sufficiently engage students
 - iii. improving the quality and range of resources to support subject development and learning, particularly in ICT.
2. Improve student achievement, particularly in Arabic and for the more able, by:
 - i. reducing the higher than average rate of teacher turnover
 - ii. increasing expectations of what students can achieve
 - iii. providing engaging opportunities for younger students to develop and practice their writing skills.
3. Ensure provision of a prayer room for Muslim students.

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								