



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



Inspection Report

Al Andalus Private Academy

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Andalus Private Academy

Inspection Date	19 – 22 May 2014
School ID#	135
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	1462
Age Range	3 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Samer Alsaleh
School Address	Falaj Hazza, Al Ain
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Official Email (ADEC)	alandulusacad.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	25 – 28 November 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
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The main strengths of the school are:

- students' basic skills and the improvement in Arabic, English and mathematics
- students' personal development, in particular their good behaviour and attendance, their relationships and their positive attitudes to learning
- teachers' subject knowledge and the improvements in teaching strategies to engage and motivate students
- the quality of protection, care, guidance and support for students' physical, social and emotional wellbeing
- the shared vision and drive for improvement demonstrated by the Boards, the leaders and teachers and the effective partnership with parents.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the use of technology and scientific enquiry in order to compare with best international standards
- progress of more able students
- the development of consistency in students' choices, especially girls, to lead healthy lifestyles
- the consistency in the use of assessment and the quality of support to meet the needs of students of all abilities
- provision of sufficient facilities and resources for sport
- provision of sufficient facilities for all students to have access to high quality materials for reading and research
- the extent to which Board members have an independent and objective view of the school and the few inconsistencies in self-evaluation.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors. They observed 79 lessons, conducted meetings with senior staff, subject co-ordinators, teachers, support staff, students, parents and the owner who is also the Chair of the Board of Directors. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed the 145 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered school policies and other documents. The principal and leadership team were involved throughout the inspection process.

Description of the School

Al Andalus Private Academy was established in the Falaj Hazza district, Al Ain in 2001. The principal has been in post since 2008 and has a well-established senior management team. Subject coordinators for the core subjects have been in post for two years. The school aims to provide all students with a balanced education so that they develop academically and personally.

There are 1,462 students in total and 54% are boys. There are 245 children in kindergarten (KG), 591 in Grades 1 to 5, 416 in Grades 6 to 9 and 210 in Grades 10 to 12. All students are Muslim. The main nationalities represented at the school are 32% Jordanian, 26% Syrian, 10% Emirati, 10% Palestinian, 9% Egyptian, 5% Sudanese and 2% Iraqi. There are smaller proportions from other countries. Most students have little or no English when they join the school. The school has identified 15 students as having special educational needs (SEN) ranging from general learning difficulties to physical needs. Students are accepted for admission following tests, interviews and observations. Student mobility is low and 91% have re-registered for the next academic year.

The school provides the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum.

School fees range from AED 4,950 in the KG to AED 12,000 in Grade 12. This is within the very affordable and low categories.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection and are at least satisfactory in all subjects. Assessment data indicates that standards are good in comparison with schools following the same curriculum and are generally in line with international averages. Standards are good in Islamic education, Arabic and mathematics. Students also make good progress in most aspects of English and attainment is satisfactory and improving. Attainment and progress in science are satisfactory.

In Islamic education, younger students are able to apply Islamic concepts in their lives. They can recite some prescribed verses and most understand the meanings of the verses. As they move through the school, students develop a good understanding of Islamic morals and values. Older students analyse important events in the Prophet's life. They demonstrate many aspects and characteristics of the Islamic identity. A few still make mistakes when reciting some of the Qur'anic verses.

Children in KG know their letters in Arabic and read simple words. Grade 5 students read with expression and understanding and confidently give opinions about the content. In the higher grades, students use grammar in their writing accurately. They express opinions confidently using standard Arabic. An example of the good standards achieved in Arabic was observed during the inspection, when older girls prepared and presented a most impressive play, including music, movement and rhyme, about the marginalization of the Arabic language. In social studies, younger students develop an understanding of citizenship and know that passports and birth certificates are forms of identification. They understand the place of music in the UAE's culture and enjoy singing in Arabic. Older students are aware of the different tribes that lived in the UAE before the union.

Children speak little English when they start school in KG. They make steady progress in listening, understanding, speaking and reading. Students make progress in all grades and by Grade 12 most students can speak confidently and express themselves well. For example, Grade 12 girls discussed their feelings in response to a film about war. The majority of students can read, understand and infer meaning from fiction and non-fiction texts. Standards in writing are broadly satisfactory.

Students make good progress in basic numeracy. Most children in the KG understand the concept of number and identify simple 2-D shapes. Grade 3 students have a very good understanding of symmetry. In older grades most

students make good progress over time in number, algebra and geometry. Most students enjoy mathematics and see a real purpose to their learning. They are increasingly able to solve challenging problems.

Children in KG know which objects float and sink. They can classify animals into reptiles and mammals. Students continue to make satisfactory gains and by Grade 5, they can link cause and effect in their observations of forces and understand how forces can be helpful. By grade 9 most students can identify links between different chemical reactions and are beginning to record their findings in a scientific manner. Older students have a good understanding of the relationship between respiration and photosynthesis. They can research information and present and discuss their ideas. Their ability to plan and carry out scientific investigations remains underdeveloped.

By Grade 12, students' skills in using technology are adequate. They research topics and prepare PowerPoint presentations for discussion and debate with classmates. Most students do not have regular access to technology in their lessons to enhance and extend their learning. Progress in music is good. In physical education (PE) it is unsatisfactory.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development has improved significantly since the last inspection, and is now good. This is mainly due to improvements in attendance which is above average at 95%. Students are well motivated and well behaved and most have positive attitudes towards learning. Students are aware of the contribution that a pluralist society makes to UAE national development and they respect each other and adults. They do not hesitate to help the teacher during lessons. They are increasingly confident expressing their opinions and accept that others have different viewpoints. They very much respect and appreciate living in the UAE and have a good knowledge and understanding of its values, culture and heritage. Most students, especially boys, enjoy taking part in a range of sporting activities. Other students participate in various activities such as drama competitions. Older girls founded the environment club and are creative in promoting care for the school and local environment. Most students have a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives. A few students, most noticeably older girls, show less awareness and choose not to participate in sporting activities when given the opportunity.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Most teachers have strong subject knowledge and their understanding of how students learn is improving as a result of effective professional development. This is having a

positive impact on progress in some lessons. Relationships in most lessons are very positive. A few teachers do not effectively manage students' behaviour. Most students listen well and a few ask questions especially when they need clarification. They especially enjoy learning in groups, sharing their ideas and solving problems together. Opportunities for students to work independently and apply what they have learnt are insufficient.

In the best lessons, teachers have a good understanding of the needs of their students and plan appropriate activities to meet individual needs. They use a variety of strategies and resources to engage and motivate them and they ask searching questions. In a minority of lessons, teachers' expectations are not well matched to the range of abilities. Some students find learning too difficult, others find it too easy and progress is hindered. Assessment of students' learning is inconsistent and is not always used to plan next steps in learning. Students are not always aware of how to improve their work. Support staff are not always effectively deployed to support learning.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum to meet the needs of students is satisfactory and improving. Provision in the KG is well matched to young children's stage of learning. The curriculum planning for KG places a firm focus on enjoyment in order to foster positive attitudes to learning. The basic curriculum for older grades is extended to enable students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of art, music, PE and geology. There is clear commitment to developing students' understanding of the values, culture and heritage of UAE. Most teachers are creative in adapting the curriculum to engage and motivate students. As a result, most students' progress is at least satisfactory and frequently good. The curriculum is not sufficiently modified to meet the needs of more able students. As a result, their progress is restricted. Students' learning is enriched through a variety of after-school clubs, competitions, trips and visitors to the school. Some students, in particular older girls, do not have access to a sufficiently wide range of sports to inspire and encourage participation to help develop their fitness and good health. Almost all students gain entry to colleges and universities to extend their learning when they leave school.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students have significantly improved and are good. The school takes seriously its duty of care for students. Checks are made on staff members' suitability to work with children and young people. Bullying is rare and effectively dealt with when it occurs. There are very effective systems for improving students' attendance. In most cases, teachers

manage students' behaviour very well because they respect them, have clear and positive expectations and make learning interesting. They give praise when it is due. A few teachers are ineffective in managing students' behaviour. There are appropriate opportunities and facilities for prayer. Arrangements for first aid and the storage and dispensing of medicines are managed well. Support and guidance for students when considering the next stage of education are good. Support for students with additional needs is adequate.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The quality of the school's buildings and premises has improved and is now satisfactory. A significant amount of funding has been allocated to refurbish and improve the facilities. Priority is given to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Buildings and outdoor areas are clean, well maintained and mainly fit for purpose. Most classrooms are bright and well ventilated. Electrical equipment and air conditioning systems are checked regularly to ensure they are safe and in working order. Most classrooms are spacious; a minority are too small for the number of students. Facilities for PE are adequate. The size and design of some science laboratories do not allow sufficiently for whole-class practical investigations. Outdoor play areas provide some protection against the sun. Some surfaces are hard and uneven. The perimeter is secure and security guards check visitors' identities on entry. The premises do not facilitate access for students with physical disabilities.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resources are satisfactory. There are sufficient teachers for the number of students. The school has difficulty in ensuring all teachers recruited are competent in the subjects they teach. KG classrooms have a good range of high quality resources and access to reading materials to enrich children's learning. Resources in other classrooms throughout the school are adequate. Technology laboratories are well stocked and provide internet access, and most classrooms have data projectors. Access to technology in the classrooms to facilitate and extend students' learning is inadequate. Resources to enable maximum student participation in sporting activities are insufficient. The range and quantity of resources for whole class science investigations are limited. The range of library books has increased. The two libraries are uninspiring; they do not foster a love of reading and do not provide modern technology for research. Specialist resources to enhance and support learning for students with SEN are inadequate. Food served in the canteen is healthy and is hygienically stored and served. Arrangements for evacuation are effective.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is satisfactory and improving. Board members, together with the Principal, vice principals, subject and phase leaders, share a vision and drive for innovation and continuous improvement with most teachers. They are increasingly effective in evaluating the school and in identifying priorities for improvement. The school self-evaluation form (SEF) was appropriately completed by a team, including subject coordinators, teachers and a student. It takes account of parents' views. The targets in the school development plan (SDP) are mostly realistic and appropriate in response to each of the recommendations in the previous inspection report. The school has been very effective, for example, in addressing students' absence and in the provision to promote understanding and appreciation of the values and heritage of the UAE. Financial resources are carefully aligned with strategic development priorities.

Students and parents appreciate the significant improvements to the premises and eagerly await the additional works which are planned for the near future. Development opportunities for teachers, together with a rigorous monitoring schedule, are making a difference to students' learning experiences and outcomes. Effective systems for communicating with parents and students, and for consulting them regarding school matters, are the basis for the improvements in personal development. Parents are listened to and the school is quick to address complaints and, where possible, to respond to suggestions. In turn, most parents play their part in working with the school in a genuine partnership in support of their children. The school works with many national and international organisations to enhance and extend provision for students.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made progress in almost all of the performance standards since the last inspection. Student attendance has improved significantly. Improvements in the protection, care, guidance and support of students have also been significant. Health and safety arrangements and safety practices are now good. Buildings and facilities have been improved. Some additional resources have been provided. Professional development to improve teachers' effectiveness has had a positive impact and has led to improvements in attainment and progress. Most teachers make the purpose of lessons clear to the students. They use a wider range of strategies to engage and motivate students. They set whole class targets; they do not set targets for individual students to improve. The use of assessment to inform planning is improving and is in need of further development. There are insufficient opportunities for students to undertake investigative work. School leaders are increasingly effective in comparing

standards and progress against international standards and against those of similar schools. The turnover of teachers has decreased. Overall, the school leadership has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to sustain the improvements made to the school.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve attainment and progress in science by providing more opportunities for students to plan and carry out investigations according to scientific method.
2. Improve students' skills in using technology by providing more opportunities and more equipment for use in classrooms.
3. Increase the rate of progress for all students, and in particular students who are more able, by:
 - i. ensuring all teachers are competent in using assessment information in planning and throughout lessons
 - ii. targeting support where it is most needed
 - iii. providing more opportunities for independent work so that students can apply what they have learnt.
4. Encourage all students, and in particular older girls, to develop healthy lifestyles and provide them with equal opportunities to participate in a range of sports.
5. Further develop the facilities, and increase the number of resources, for PE to ensure maximum participation of all students during lessons.
6. Foster a love of reading by enhancing the facilities and improving the quality of resources for reading and research.
7. Further develop Board members' skills in holding the school to account by:
 - i. ensuring they have an independent and objective view of the school's performance
 - ii. involving them in the self-evaluation process.

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								