



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



Private School Inspection Report

Al Basma British School

Academic Year 2016– 2017

lqraa

Al Basma British School

Inspection Date	February 6, 2017	to	February 9, 2017
Date of previous inspection	April 20, 2015	to	April 23, 2015

General Information	
School ID	245
Opening year of school	August 2014
Principal	Allison McDonald
School telephone	+971 (0)2 562 3454
School Address	Al Houri Street, Old Al Bahia, Abu Dhabi
Official email (ADEC)	albasma.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School website	Albasmaschool.ae
Fee ranges (per annum)	Low to high AED 19,000 to AED 31,000
Licensed Curriculum	
Main Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Other Curriculum (if applicable)	----
External Exams/ Standardised tests	EMSA
Accreditation	British Schools Overseas (BSO)

Students		
Total number of students	1418	
%of students per curriculum	Main Curriculum	100%
	Other Curriculum	0
Number of students in other phases	KG	402
	Primary:	786
	Middle:	230
	High:	0
Age range	3 years to 15 years	
Grades or Year Groups	KG1 to Grade 9	
Gender	Boys and girls	
% of Emirati Students	42%	
Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Pakistani: 12%	
	2. Egyptian: 10%	
	3. Jordanian: 9%	
Staff		
Number of teachers	111	
Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	21	
Teacher-student ratio	KG/ FS	1:20
	Other phases	1:12
Teacher turnover	8%	

Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	5
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	150
Number of joint lesson observations	10
Number of parents' questionnaires	422; (return rate: 32%)
Details of other inspection activities	The inspection team held meetings with the senior management team, heads of departments, teachers and governors. Inspectors analysed school documents, performance data, records and students' work. They attended assemblies and spoke to parents, students, and children in the Kindergarten (KG).

School	
School Aims	'We inspire our students to thrive as global citizens within a happy, positive and respectful learning environment.'
School vision and mission	'We aspire to be a global community of thinkers, creators, innovators and leaders who will have a positive impact on the world of tomorrow.'
Admission Policy	The school has open and inclusive admission policies and procedures. Admission is based on assessment for placement from Grade 1 onwards to best suit students' needs. KG children are invited to spend some time in provision to become familiar with routines.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	The leadership team comprises the principal, the primary vice principal, the pastoral vice principal, three assistant vice principals, and three senior teachers. The governing body comprises representatives from the proprietorial body and a group of governors.

SEN Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

SEN Category	Number of students identified through external assessments	Number of other students identified by the school internally
Intellectual disability	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	4	1
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	6	8
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	1	1
Speech and Language Disorders	6	8
Physical and health related disabilities	11	0
Visually impaired	0	0
Hearing impaired	1	0
Multiple disabilities	4	1

G&T Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	0
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	3
Social maturity and leadership	35
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	9
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	3
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	3

The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A	High performing (Outstanding, Very Good or Good)
Band B	Satisfactory (Acceptable)
Band C	In need of significant improvement (Weak or Very Weak)

The school was judged to be:	Band A	Good
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	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
Performance Standards	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement						
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills						
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment						
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum						
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students						
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management						

Summary Evaluation: The school's overall performance						
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The Performance of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall performance

The overall performance of the school is good. Children enter KG with knowledge and skills that are low for their age. They achieve well in relation to their different starting points. In the main school, students' attainment is above curriculum expectations and their progress is good overall. Students' personal development is very good throughout the phases. This is based on very strong rapport between staff and students, the positive behaviour and attitudes and the good knowledge of the UAE culture and Islamic values. The quality of teaching, assessment and the curriculum have now improved and they are good. Support for students with special educational needs (SEN) and for those who are gifted and talented (G&T) is good. School leaders and staff have worked together effectively to bring about rapid improvements in the school's practice, particularly in the KG and in the implementation and adaptation for the English National Curriculum (ENC). They have yet to further improve achievement in the Arabic language and the levels of consistency and challenge in teaching and learning.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

The school has made good progress since its last inspection. Leaders at all levels have an improved understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and how to bring about improvement. The KG has continued to improve and children's English communication, language and literacy skills are now very good. The role of middle leaders and the governing body has strengthened. Attainment and progress have risen across subjects as teaching quality has improved. This is due to well-targeted professional development and mentoring, increased expectations among teachers of what students can achieve, and the improved range and quality of resources available. Students' personal and social development, including their attendance, has improved due to developments in their care, guidance and support. Overall, school leaders' capacity to improve the school is good.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school is making strong progress to develop the skills that underpin innovation. Students have a strong work ethic and develop good leadership and independent learning skills. For example in Grade 8, students eagerly create their own robots, using a variety of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT) to program their models. Grade 9 students lead debates such as the United Nations Conference to highlight the importance of

human rights and to suggest ways to reduce the rate of pollution. Students have access to daily technologies to support their 21st century skills.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- the impact of school leaders on improving standards in the English national curriculum
- continuous improvement to the education that children receive in the KG
- the very strong relationships within the school as shown in students' good behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and improved attendance
- the quality of support provided for students who have special educational needs
- students' appreciation of the heritage, culture and future vision of the UAE and their understanding of Islamic values
- very effective management of the day-to-day life of the school.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- the standards in reading, writing, listening and speaking the Arabic language
- in the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning in a minority of lessons
- curriculum adaptation to challenge further the most-able students.



Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	
Social Studies	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	
English	Attainment	Very Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	
Science	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	
Language of instruction (if other than English and Arabic as First Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Good	Good	Good	



The overall quality of students' achievement is good. The school's assessment data, lesson observations, and children's recent work indicate that most enter the school with knowledge and skills that are lower than where they are expected to be. By the end of KG2, the majority attain levels that are above age-related expectations. As they progress through the school, students continue to make good gains in most subjects. Students' performance in Arabic EMSA tests at the end of Grades 5 and 7 last year indicates that most students attain levels that are in line with curriculum expectations. Students do not yet sit any other external standardised test to help school benchmark its performance against international standards. Leaders are taking effective steps to compare their school's performance with other British schools to improve their practice. Different groups of students make similar progress.

Students' achievement in Islamic education is acceptable overall. The achievement of native Arabic speakers is acceptable in primary and middle phases and good in KG. Overall the achievement of non-native Arabic speakers is good across the school. By the end of the primary phase, most native Arabic students can recite verses following 'Tajweed' rules appropriate to their age group and understand the importance of prayer for Muslims. By the end of the middle phase, the majority of non-native Arabic students show good knowledge of how Islam spread during the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and confidently articulate their findings at a level above expectations.

Students' achievement in Arabic is acceptable overall. It is good in KG and acceptable in the primary and middle phases for both first and second language speakers. In Arabic as a first language, by the end of KG, most children can recognise different sounds, find similar rhyming words, and the majority can write their names correctly, read simple words and speak with confidence. By the end of the primary phase, most can read and write short sentences in different tenses and develop an acceptable knowledge of punctuation in line with curriculum standards. By the end of the middle phase, most students can read fluently and confidently in line with expectations and answer comprehension questions correctly. Their writing skills are not as strong as their reading. Students' achievement in Arabic as second language is acceptable overall. It is good in KG where most children recognise most of the Arabic alphabet and the majority can respond to simple instructions in Arabic and sound some letters correctly. By the end of the primary phase, most students can read and understand simple short sentences. By the end of the middle phase, most can read simple text, write short sentences and can express themselves with clear intonation.

Students' achievement in social studies is good. In KG, children know about people



who help them in the community and the majority can explain confidently their role, demonstrating understanding above curriculum expectations. In Grade 4, the majority of students are able to compare traditional sports with modern day activities in the UAE and make links to their own lives, demonstrating deep knowledge of the subject. By Grade 8, students are confident and accurate in sharing their ideas and research findings about the traditional and contemporary occupations in the UAE such as fishing, pearl diving, agriculture and oil trading, demonstrating attainment and progress above expectations.

Students' attainment in English is good overall, and their progress is very good. Attainment is very good in KG and good in other phases. At all phases, most students are attaining at least in line with age-related curriculum expectations in reading, writing, listening and speaking, and the majority above. In Grade 1, for example, the majority of students use a wide range of emotive vocabulary very effectively and they use imperatives accurately in their work. By Grade 7, students have a deeper range of skills in reading and writing for a range of purposes. They take the lead in research tasks and confidently and fluently report their findings orally to their peers. Writing progresses very well through the primary and middle phases and is used for a wide variety of purposes.

Students' achievement in mathematics is good. At all phases, most students are gaining at least age-related curriculum levels and the majority have gained knowledge, understanding and skills in all key areas of mathematics at levels above those expected for their age. In KG2, for example, children's knowledge of shapes is applied effectively to real-life contexts as they recognise many shapes in the environment and use good mathematical vocabulary to describe their properties. Students make good progress through the primary phase in developing both written and mental computational skills, and by Grade 9 the majority of students can reason deductively in number and algebra, use geometrical constructions, and have good skills in solving problems.

Students' achievement in science is good. The majority are attaining levels above those expected for their age. In KG2, for example, children use magnets safely to explore different resources and they know how magnets attract certain materials. In Grade 3, students confidently investigate the effects of different liquids on an egg shell, making hypotheses and leading their peers in conducting a fair test. By Grade 9, students demonstrate good knowledge of the properties of bonding and can describe the differences between types of bonding such as covalent, ionic and metallic.

Students' achievement in other subjects is good. In physical education (PE), for

example, they make good progress during regular planned physical activities including swimming, dance and basketball, and demonstrate good levels of understanding and physical skill for their age. In art, music and drama students make good progress in developing their understanding, practical skills and talents, demonstrating enjoyment in their learning. Students achieve well in French as they learn the vocabulary and grammar effectively.

Students' learning skills are good overall. Students are actively involved in their learning and know how well they are doing. They are able to work productively on their own and in groups without much guidance from teachers. They understand the connections between subjects, and are able to apply their learning to the world beyond school. They respond well to opportunities to develop creativity and imagination in their work.

Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Personal development	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	

Students' personal and social development is very good. In KG, children work and play together harmoniously. Students show genuine warmth and care for each other and relationships are very respectful. The ethos around the school reflects good standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning. In KG, children listen attentively to instructions, share resources fairly and take turns. Attendance has improved significantly and is now very good at 96%. Students almost always arrive at school and to lessons on time. Students have a very good understanding of safe and healthy living and participate enthusiastically in activities promoting its importance. Students demonstrate very good understanding of Islamic values and appreciation

of the UAE culture and heritage due to a wide variety of activities within and beyond the curriculum. They take an active part in events such as the UAE's National, Flag and Tolerance Days, and regularly visit places of interest to deepen their knowledge of Emirati identity. In history, geography, art and music, students learn about the cultural diversity around them. For example, in history, students learn about different countries, food and habitats.

Students have many opportunities to be innovative and creative, but more has yet to be done to embed these fully in all core subjects. Students lead drama activities to highlight the importance of regular attendance and its positive impact on achievement. Students contribute well to the life of the school and the wider community. 'Eco leaders' confidently explain their responsibility to keep the school tidy. Parents value the support that 'Young Leaders' give them during parents' open evenings. The school council actively represents students' views to school leaders. Students raise funds for charities to help others in need

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

Teaching and Assessment Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	

The overall quality of teaching and assessment is good. It is very good in English. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and use time and resources effectively. They share learning objectives so that students are clear about expectations. Teachers use questions well to check students' understanding and deal with misconceptions when they occur. Relationships are very positive and ensure that learning flows smoothly. Most teachers plan and provide engaging learning experiences which motivate students. In a very successful Grade 2 English lesson, for example, high expectations encouraged students to work at brisk pace exploring rhetorical questions and using very good vocabulary to describe favourite animals across the world. This resulted in very good progress in developing higher order thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers know students well. In the large majority of lessons, they provide appropriate challenge and support for them, including the more-able. Students achieving low and those who require help receive

extra support to close gaps in their learning. In less effective lessons, teachers do not use assessment information to fully support and extend the learning of all groups of students. In the Arabic language medium lessons, students do not always have enough opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills or the opportunity to actively contribute in learning.

In the subjects taught in English, teachers mark students' work regularly, note the next steps and encourage students to act on their suggestions to improve the quality of their work. However, such good practice is not consistent throughout the school. Continuous assessment procedures are robust and linked to the curriculum levels. Leaders are taking steps to compare their data with other schools to improve their performance. Leaders and staff regularly meet and analyse assessment data for individuals and groups of students to spot any gaps. Teachers appreciate the regular professional development opportunities and dialogue they have with school leaders which have a positive impact on their use of assessment.

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Curriculum Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Good	

The overall quality of the curriculum is good. It is broad and relevant and is reviewed to ensure good continuity and progression but this has yet to bring about sufficient improvement in Arabic language. Teachers set activities in most of the subjects taught in English which build on students' previous learning and help close gaps in understanding. Students throughout the school have access to very good opportunities to transfer knowledge between different subjects and to fully develop their talents, interests and aspirations. The curriculum provides well for students to develop their English linguistic, mathematical and scientific skills. They become increasingly confident in taking an active part in debates and leading activities in assemblies, using music and drama. Leaders consistently monitor and evaluate the impact of the curriculum to bring about further improvements in students' learning.

The school's approaches to curriculum adaptation are good. Teachers plan well to

meet the needs of almost all students. The curriculum is very well enhanced by high-quality extra-curricular activities such as art, music, drama, chess and basketball. It provides well for social contributions through the innovative recycling projects, the competitions in reading and mathematics, and opportunities for students to lead in the Model United Nations conferencing. Links to UAE culture and society are good, helping students to develop their understanding of the UAE culture and heritage and Islamic values. Students enjoy the many opportunities to develop their creativity, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, including robotics. The curriculum has yet to be adapted further to increase levels of challenge, particularly for the more-able students.

Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	
Care and support	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	

The overall quality of protection, care, guidance and support for students is very good. The school provides a very safe, secure and organised learning environment. Very effective procedures for safeguarding, including child protection and behaviour management, are shared with staff, parents and students. Staff receive extensive training to ensure that students' welfare, health and safety are paramount. Students are well informed about different types of bullying and other forms of abuse, and are very confident to ask for help should a welfare concern arise. Supervision of students, including transport arrangements is very robust. The clinic is very well equipped. Nurses are suitably qualified and provide strong encouragement to parents and their children to adopt healthy lifestyles, including attention to personal hygiene and healthy eating. Records of accidents and incidents are very well recorded and monitored to identify trends and patterns. Premises and resources are very well maintained, accessible to all, and conducive to learning.

The quality of care and support is very good. Systems and procedures for managing behaviour are effective and staff and students work in mutual respect. Leaders and

staff show genuine care towards students and KG children. Very effective management of attendance has improved the attendance rate. The school has very good systems to identify SEN and G&T students. Staff provide well-targeted support to help students who need special support to learn well. The school's SEN co-ordinator works very well with parents and has established strong links with outside professionals and relevant agencies to help ensure that students receive the support they need. Staff support students well, but, occasionally, do not always provide enough challenge to maximise their learning, especially for the more-able. Guidance for academic choices and preparation for future education is very effective. A very well-organised induction arrangement into KG, the transition into school, and helpful careers guidance, fully support students' personal development and promote their academic development.

Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Leadership and management Indicators	
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Very Good
Governance	Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Very Good
The overall quality of leadership and management is good. The principal, well supported by senior leaders and staff, provides strong and effective leadership. School leaders have high expectations and share a common vision for high standards, rapid improvement and community cohesion. Relationships between staff are professional and effective and morale is high. Middle leaders have attended training courses to strengthen their leadership skills and to bring a wealth of expertise to school, including the adaptation of the English national curriculum to meet the needs and interests of students. The capacity for further improvement is strong. The school's self-evaluation is realistic and includes the views of parents, students and information from stakeholders. Information from the self-evaluation form (SEF) is used well to highlight the school's strengths and to inform developments. The	



school development plan (SDP) accurately focuses on what the school needs to do to improve further. It includes timescales, costings, clear responsibilities and systems for monitoring and evaluation. Leaders observe staff regularly, give them specific feedback to help them improve the quality of their practice and hold them accountable for students' achievement. They have yet to focus sufficiently on the quality of all students' learning experiences in lessons, however, particularly in Arabic-medium subjects.

Partnerships between parents and school are very strong. Parents contribute very well to the life and the work of the school. They take the lead in UAE celebrations of culture and heritage. Parents are pleased with the very effective communications that keep them fully informed on their child's progress and wellbeing. The school contributes very well to the life of the wider community, for instance, working with emergency services and other national and international schools to enrich their curricula.

Governors are supportive and visible in school. They monitor the school's actions and hold leaders accountable for students' performance. They have yet to focus sufficiently on bringing standards in Arabic subjects up to those in the English subjects. The day-to-day management of the school and its procedures and routines are very efficient and have a positive impact on students' achievements. The school is appropriately staffed with suitably qualified teachers who benefit from regular professional development. Premises and resources are of high quality, including a library, science laboratories, prayer rooms and extensive facilities for art, design and technology and sports. These resources fully support the effective delivery of the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve achievement in the Arabic language by ensuring that teachers:
 - i. provide more opportunities to help students fully participate in learning
 - ii. offer more effective and regular learning experiences to help students develop their reading and writing skills
 - iii. consistently check the progress students make and offer them support so that they can achieve well.
2. Develop consistently high quality teaching and learning by ensuring that all teachers:
 - i. use assessment information well to plan for next steps and help students consistently make the best possible progress
 - ii. offer high-quality feedback to help students further improve their learning
 - iii. include additional levels of challenge within their medium- and long-term planning
 - iv. deliver appropriately challenging tasks and activities for all students within lessons, particularly for those who are more able.
3. Further improve the impact of leadership and governance by:
 - i. ensuring the curriculum is adapted effectively to stretch more-able students in all subjects
 - ii. ensuring improvement systems focus more directly on the quality of students' learning experiences, particularly in Arabic language
 - iii. enabling teachers in different subjects to experience classroom best practice first hand.