



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Bateen Scientific Private School

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Iqraa

Al Bateen Scientific Private School

Inspection Date	5 th – 8 th May, 2013
School ID#	090
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	American
Number of Students	1004
Age Range	3 – 18 years
Gender	Mixed KG to Grade 3 and Girls Grades 4 to 12
Principal	Afra Al-Awani
School Address	Abu Dhabi Eastern Street, Behind the bus station
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Introduction

The school was inspected by five inspectors who observed 80 lessons, conducted 30 interviews, both formal and informal, with staff, students and parents. In addition interviews were held with an educational consultant to the school and members of the Family Development Foundation (FDF). Over 300 parent surveys were reviewed and analysed, as were data and documents supplied by the school. Students' work was also scrutinized. Inspectors toured the building and grounds, attended two assemblies and observed students at break and snack times. Arrival and departure of students and transport arrangements were also observed.

Description of the School

Al Bateen Scientific Private School is one of four schools operated by the Family Development Foundation (FDF) in the region. It serves boys and girls from KG1 to Grade 3, and girls from Grades 4-12. There are 1004 students, all of whom are native Arabic speakers and Muslim. The largest nationality represented is Emirati, 75%, with smaller percentages of Jordanians at 6%, Syrians at 4%, Egyptians at 4% and Palestinians at 3%. There is an application fee of AED 500 for all students. The school fees for KG1-2 are AED 12,700 and book fee AED 1638. The school has not identified any students as having special educational needs (SEN), Grades 1-8 fees range from AED 14,900 to AED 16,900 in Grade 8, and book fees from AED 1638 to AED 2002 and Grades 9-12 fees range from AED 17,500 to AED 21,100 in Grade 12. While the book fees range from AED 2002 to AED 2548 for Grades 9-12. The school was opened in 1988 and moved to the current campus in January 2013. The senior management team comprises a principal and two assistant principals. Subject coordinators and stage managers constitute middle management. The latter have an administrative role and no involvement in teaching and learning. There are two social workers and several development specialists from the FDF assigned to work with the school. In addition, the school engages the services of an educational consultant. The FDF handles all monetary matters including budget preparation and approval, purchasing and payroll. The FDF also manages the contracts for maintenance, food services and transportation. The principal reports to the Foundation which is the approving authority for all employments. The school follows an American curriculum, with the MOE curriculum for Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band B

Grade 5

Inspectors judged Al Bateen Scientific Private School to be in Band B, that is a school judged to be satisfactory.

The standards that students reach and their academic progress is below international standards. Attainment is in line with standards set out for the curriculum students follow, but it dips below international standards in English, mathematics and science. Attainment and progress are satisfactory in Arabic. Most make satisfactory progress across non-core subjects, but more able students do not progress at the pace they could. Independence of thought and critical thinking are not well developed across the curriculum, particularly in the lower grades. Although students regularly take information and communication technology (ICT) classes, their skills are not commensurate with students their age in other countries. The KG curriculum does not encourage independence and choice to the degree that it could and is not satisfactory.

Few students are native English speakers, but most make satisfactory progress in developing understanding, fluency and accuracy in the language. By Grade 5, most students are able to find information from what they read; they can pick out the most important points from a text and discuss what it means. In the higher grades, students progress well in constructing an explanation. By Grade 10, they are able to offer thoughtful answers with reasoned arguments and they write accurately using an appropriate range of vocabulary.

In Arabic, the majority of students make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and in learning to spell accurately. From Grade 2 onwards, most students understand what they read, but do not write more extended pieces. Progress in speaking is strongest and by Grade 6, most students can express themselves fluently and accurately using standard Arabic. Students in Grade 12 are able to make confident presentations using correct grammatical forms in speaking and writing. In Islamic Studies attainment is in line with expectations set out in the curriculum and there is satisfactory progress across all grades in students' understanding of the laws of Islam and the morals, values and habits that Muslims should demonstrate in everyday life. Older students can understand and successfully explain the meaning and reasons of prescribed 'Hadeeths' and, where appropriate, the concepts conveyed; they are less secure in explaining the application of Islamic etiquette.

Students' progress is uneven in mathematics between grades; most make satisfactory progress in calculation and understanding of number and place value

in the lower grades. In Grades 8 through 10, the work of most students shows that they have gained a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding in geometry and algebra. In science, students make satisfactory gains in factual knowledge in relation to curriculum expectations, but their rate of their progress in developing scientific skills is inconsistent between grades. By Grade 12, their competence in setting up experiments, using specialist equipment and recording their findings is in line with curriculum expectations, but it dips below best international practice.

Students throughout the school exhibit mature behaviour and are respectful and kind to each other and to adults. This is particularly true in the upper grades, but in the lower grades there are pockets of misbehaviour by some of the boys. Students follow directions well but do not demonstrate a great deal of initiative or independence. Attendance figures are high and students enjoy coming to school each day. Punctuality is not as strong. Almost all students demonstrate a strong knowledge of the UAE and are proud of their heritage, but are also appreciative of other cultures and ways of life. From an early age they learn about healthy and safe living and demonstrate this in their actions in classes and at break times.

Almost all teachers have strong subject knowledge particularly in speciality areas in the upper grades but their knowledge does not always translate into effective teaching. Although some teachers are making an effort to introduce collaborative and student centered learning, there is still a heavy reliance on teacher directed instruction and the use of textbooks. This is particularly so in KG where children do not have sufficient opportunity to play and engage in active learning to securely develop their early literacy, mathematical, and scientific skills. Lesson planning for the most part is well done and thoughtful but its implementation is often not as effective as it could be. Students do not always know what they should be learning and why. Teachers, particularly in the lower grades, are not always effective classroom managers. Some shout at students to get their attention and do not require them to speak one at a time thus creating a noisy and undisciplined environment. The pace of lessons is often slow and lacks challenge particularly for the more able students. The development of critical thinking skills, through in depth and extended questioning, is not part of many lessons. Students are enthusiastic learners and are eager to participate but because of the slow pace and lack of challenge become disengaged. The opportunities for conducting in depth and rigorous research are lacking, particularly in science. As a result, the development of 21 century skills is weak.

The school offers an American and MOE curriculum and has recently adopted the American Common Core Standards in English and mathematics and uses the

California State Standards for Science. The MOE curriculum is followed for Arabic, Islamic and UAE social studies. Overall the curriculum delivery is unsatisfactory as it lacks breadth and balance and does not sufficiently support the acquisition of the skills necessary for the modern workplace or higher education. Younger students do have regularly scheduled art and PE classes, but there is no provision for music, drama and other creative classes. There are few options for older students and they have no Physical Education (PE) or art. The school plans special days for students like International Day and these are enthusiastically attended and enjoyed, but there are too few opportunities for enrichment on a regular basis. There are no extra or co-curricular activities and few field trips. Links with the community and local environment are insufficient. As a result, students are not developing their leadership skills and taking responsibility outside of the school environment. There are few cross-curricular links except in science and mathematics.

There is a positive ethos in the school and students feel safe and well taken care of. There are well defined and documented procedures for student behaviour and these are applied with consistency. Child protection procedures are in place and staff are trained to know what to do should a concern arise. No corporal punishment is allowed and bullying and intimidation are not part of the school culture. The clinic and science labs are well managed and all medicines and dangerous substances are under lock and key. The two social workers provide pastoral care and students are well advised about their choices after graduating. Although procedures are in place to handle latecomers, there are still a large number of students who arrive late each day both to school and to morning assemblies.

The buildings and grounds are attractive and well maintained with an adequate number of classrooms and auxiliary areas. The school's move to its current campus is not completely finalised and the delivery of furniture for the cafeteria and other orders are still to be completed. The three computer labs, two science labs, library, cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium and outdoor sports areas serve the students well. In some instances, however, the size of classrooms is inadequate for the number of students assigned. One of the art rooms, for example, is quite cramped and does not have any space to work on creative projects, and the KG rooms are not large enough to provide adequate circulation and learning areas. The maintenance of the facility is of high quality and daily checks are made of the campus and the follow up of most problems is rapid. The contracted transportation system is well run and reliable with female bus supervisors on all vehicles. Evacuation procedures are well known, and regular fire drills are held and documented. Signage is appropriate and easy to follow. The play area for KG

has a few pieces of equipment, but they are old and there is no padded surface below them. Sun protection is not available in play, assembly or sports areas.

The school is well resourced with sufficient textbooks, computers and lab equipment. Materials and resources in the KG area are appropriate and abundant but the materials in the library are not adequate for the size of the school and there are too few books for older students. The school has an adequate number of qualified teachers, but in KG the size of the classes suggests the need for an assistant in each one.

The new Principal has instituted a number of positive changes in a short period of time. The lines of responsibility are now clearer, as are the written policies and procedures. She has improved communication both across the school and with parents. All agree that she has a true open door policy and cares about the school and the students. She has put in place a strong senior management team who know the school well and understand its strengths and areas for improvement. They are in tune with what needs to be done and have made significant progress since the last inspection. However, there has been insufficient impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The role of stage managers and how they link to subject coordinators is not as clear as it could be. This arrangement is not to the best advantage of students' talents and abilities, particularly the higher achieving, and needs to be better defined in order to improve teaching and learning.

Communication with parents is very effective with the use of both electronic and paper formats. Participation in the life of the school by parents is not as strong as it could be. There is a core group of parents who are very involved, but a large number are not. Participation by parents in making decision, and a structured and formal way to do this, is not in place. The school has made great strides forward in some areas and the new principal and her team have a clear vision and the capacity and drive to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise levels of attainment to match international standards by:
 - i. strengthening the procedures for formally monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and provide more focused feedback and individualized professional development for teachers; and

- ii. establishing more differentiated learning opportunities for students in all classrooms with a particular focus on providing higher achieving students with more challenging activities.
2. Improve the KG program by developing a broad range of activity-based learning across all KG classes and reduce the use of workbooks and worksheets.
3. Improve parental involvement in decision making by putting in place a formal structure to involve all parents in the life of the school and provide opportunities for feedback and organized participation.