



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



Inspection Report

Al Bateen Scientific Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

Al Bateen Scientific Private School

Inspection Date	10 – 13 May 2015
School ID#	090
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	1076
Age Range	4 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed KG to Grade 3; Female Grades 4 to 12
Principal	Afra Hamad Al Awani
School Address	Street 16, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 666 7911
Fax Number	-----
Official Email (ADEC)	Albateensci.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	May 2013

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:

- strong leadership from the principal and senior leadership team
- students develop good skills and personal qualities that will support them well in their next stages of education
- good links with parents who play an increasing role in the life of the school
- very effective relationship with the proprietors and external organisations
- most students achieve broadly international standards in English, mathematics and science.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the use of more effective benchmarks to assess academic achievement against international standards
 - the effective implementation of 21st century skills
 - the staffing ratios in Kindergarten
 - the availability and use of digital technologies in the classroom
 - activities that provide stretch and challenge to all students.
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by 5 inspectors over a period of 4 days. They observed 90 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, students and parents. The lead inspector met with members of the Family Development Foundation (FDF). Inspectors examined test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed 362 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal and senior leadership team were fully involved throughout the inspection process; they undertook 3 joint lesson observations together with inspectors. During the inspection, the school was also visited by 6 reviewers from its accreditation body 'AdvancEd'.

Description of the School

Al Bateen Scientific Private School is one of 4 schools operated by the Family Development Foundation (FDF) in the region. The FDF is an organisation sponsored by the Abu Dhabi government. The school's mission is for their students to be, 'pioneers who are academically, ethically and culturally distinct'. The school opened in 1988 and moved to the current campus in January 2013. The new campus had previously been a government cycle 3 school. It follows an American curriculum aligned to the Common Core Curriculum Standards (CCCS) together with the MoE curriculum for Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies.

The school serves boys and girls from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 3, and girls from grades 4-12. There are 1076 students of which 22% are boys; almost all are native Arabic speakers and Muslim. The largest nationality represented is Emirati, 69%, with smaller percentages of Jordanians at 7%, Syrians at 4%, Egyptians at 5% and Palestinians at 4%. The school has identified 8 students as having special educational needs (SEN) and these include 4 students with more severe learning needs and 4 with behavioural problems. There is 1 student in Grade 9 who uses a wheelchair. The school has an open admissions policy in KG and has a very long waiting list for admissions in KG and grade 6.

The school fees for KG1-2 are AED 13,200 with an additional book fee AED 1638. Fees range from AED 14,400 in Grade 1 to AED 16,800 in Grade 5, and book fees from AED 1638 to AED 2002. In the middle section, Grades 6-9 fees are 17,400 to 18,000 and in Grades 9-12, they range from AED 19,200 to AED 21,600 in Grade 12 with book fees ranging from AED 2002 to AED 2548 for students in Grade 12. Fees are in the moderate category.

The senior management team comprises a principal and 2 assistant principals. Subject coordinators and phase managers constitute middle management. 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 FDF, which is the approving authority for all employment.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The academic achievement of students is now close to international standards. All students leaving in Grade 12 are able to apply for a university placement in the UAE and some have aspirations and achievements that allow them to travel abroad for their higher education. The behaviour of students is generally good and they enjoy learning. The quality of teaching and learning is gradually developing.

The management and leadership is strong and offers the school stability and clear strategic direction. The improvements since the last inspection indicate a good capacity to maintain the momentum of positive change. The school's partnership with parents is good. The links with the FDF provide valuable support and the processes for monitoring school improvement are good.

Students' attainment & progress

The attainment and progress of students are satisfactory and improving. They are consistently at least satisfactory across all subjects, but best in Arabic, English and science where they are satisfactory and improving. This judgment is based on attainment and progress as seen in lesson observations, work scrutiny and results from external examinations. All Grade 12 students took the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test in 2014 with an average score of 6.5, which is at least satisfactory. In the American Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) for mathematics, students at Grade 12 recorded a score just below the average for students in the US. There are no advanced placement (AP) classes.

Nearly all children arrive in KG with little knowledge of English and all students are learning English as an additional language (EAL). Children make reasonable progress in recognising letters and their sounds and by the end of KG, many can use this knowledge to read simple books. As they progress through the school students become increasingly confident and proficient in the use of English to express their ideas. In a Grade 5 lesson, for example, students were able to talk in a mature manner about the tenuous relationship between happiness and money. A Grade 5 student observed, 'You don't appreciate what you have until it has gone.' By the time they reach Grade 12, students could talk about the effects of capitalism on the central character in 'Death of a Salesman'.

In Arabic, students benefit from their teachers' consistent use of standard Arabic. This provides a model that encourages them to use correct grammatical forms and nearly all students are at their expected grade level. In assembly and class, even the younger students can recite 'suras' from the Holy Qur'an clearly and with

the correct rhythm and intonation. In social studies, students develop a level of knowledge and understanding of the history, geography and politics of the Middle East in line with curriculum expectations.

In science and mathematics, students can employ their knowledge of English to use specialist terminology accurately and with understanding. They are able to set up and record scientific experiments and show some understanding of the scientific process. The school has not established any reliable assessment procedure that would allow them to benchmark student attainment against the American Common Core Curriculum Standards.

Students' do not have sufficient opportunities to work independently or pursue lines of research that would add breadth and depth to the curriculum. They rarely have the opportunity to use digital technologies in the classroom to support, enhance or extend their learning.

Students' personal development

The personal development of students is good. Throughout the school, the behaviour of girls is good. They show respect to their peers and for all other adults in the school, not just teachers. Children in KG and Grade 1 are lively and enthusiastic learners. They are eager to participate; their enthusiasm, is not always well controlled by teachers and a few boys find it difficult to conform to the school's behaviour code.

Many of the girls provide active support to the school through their involvement in the various school organisations. Many students are part of the School Support Organisation (SSO) which is responsible for the organisation of the science fair, sports and international day. Some senior girls are active members of the Red Crescent and this has resulted in money being raised for relief supplies. In many classes, students could take more responsibility for their own learning. Before they reach the senior grades students have few opportunities to undertake extended pieces of self-directed research.

By the time students reach Grade 7, they develop a sound understanding of the heritage and culture of the UAE. They are articulate when explaining the benefits of good governance as demonstrated in the UAE. Most students have a satisfactory grasp of what contributes to a healthy lifestyle and can explain the benefits of a balanced diet and the importance of exercise. As students approach Grade 12, they successfully develop those skills and personal qualities that will support them in the next stages of their education.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now at least satisfactory in all sections of the school. The quality of teaching observed by inspectors ranged from very good to very unsatisfactory; a large majority was deemed at least satisfactory. The most effective teaching was seen in English, mathematics and science; less effective lessons were mainly observed in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies.

Teachers have good subject knowledge, which ensures they are well prepared for lessons. Students approach their classes with enthusiasm and most display a willingness to be challenged to achieve more. Lesson objectives are well thought out and presented to students as ‘I Can’ goals. These objectives describe the learning targets specific to the students’ course of study and used by most teachers, and sometimes students to assess their success in mastering these goals. Students are proud of their achievements and can describe what was required of them in the classroom. Many teachers rely heavily on the textbooks aligned to the CCCS resulting in students having insufficient opportunity to make choices about their learning or undertake self-directed learning.

Professional development (PD) for teachers has made all aware of the different abilities within their class. Many attempt to match the planned learning activities to the needs of 3 broad bands of ability. Some teachers achieve this successfully, providing tasks at the 3 levels of ability whilst at the same time enabling all students to achieve the same learning objective. This practice is not fully established and some students who learn at a quicker pace than even those in the most able groups do not receive sufficient challenge. When working in groups, the assignment of specific roles to students is rarely well managed by teachers with some taking control and completing work on behalf of less dominant students.

The ability of teachers to manage their eager students when conducting question and answer sessions is not always effective. When students are allowed to shout out answers, common in classes for younger students, the teacher cannot be sure of the accuracy of students’ answers. In the best classes, teachers are able to use higher order questioning skills to probe student understanding and to challenge them to think creatively. The school’s willingness to welcome students with additional needs is not sufficiently matched by the support teachers receive in implementing individual education plans (IEPs) in the classroom.

Meeting students’ needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is satisfactory and improving. The school has gained confidence in its use of the CCCS and the rubrics for measuring student progress. The related training enables many teachers to make lessons relevant

and interesting. Nearly all students have a strong understanding of the UAE and can describe its economy, values and culture accurately.

Students have access to a wide range of additional activities that take place after school. The cooking club is popular with boys and girls. Older girls enjoy their sports activities including soccer, and would like to see this extended so they can engage in competition with other schools. The activities supported by the SSO enable many older students to make a valuable contribution to the life of the school.

Students are supported in the wider curriculum by their use of information and communication technology (ICT) suites where learning in the core subjects can be linked to the acquisition of ICT skills. The impact of ICT to enhance the curriculum is limited as there are insufficient digital technologies available in the classroom.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has good procedures for ensuring the safety and care of students. Parents report they appreciate the security their children enjoy when they are in school. Students say that they feel safe and well taken care of. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere and those students entrusted with the role of prefect take their duties seriously. There are defined and documented procedures for behaviour applied with consistency. Child protection procedures are in place and staff are trained to know what to do should a concern arise.

The school gives clear direction to its students about moral values. Parents very much appreciate this feature. Taking direction from the Arabic department, the school promotes a different moral value each month such as honesty, respect and tolerance. Students in the SSO arrange interesting activities and displays to support these values. Students talk confidently about their Muslim faith and make regular trips to the school's Mosque as part of Islamic education.

Attendance is above average at 94%. Very few students arrive after the beginning of the first lesson but large numbers arrive during morning assembly. The school has employed a number of strategies to counter tardiness at the start of the day; none have yet proved effective.

The school provides high quality guidance to students in Grade 12 as they prepare to leave. The leavers' handbook provides advice for students and their parents about the requirements for university entrance. This is supported by visits to local universities. Past students contribute to the school's destination surveys and report that they were well prepared for the transition to university.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school provides a satisfactory and improving learning environment. Over the last 2 years the FDF have invested heavily in refurbishing the old government school they inherited and all the buildings are now clean and well maintained. There is an attractive grassed courtyard in the middle of the school, which provides a pleasant area for students to sit and socialise with their peers. Most classrooms are of a good size allowing teachers to create varied seating arrangements for different learning activities. There are many displays of student work; standards of presentation are not always of good quality. KG and Grade 1 classrooms are often small for the number of students on roll. Lack of space places restrictions on the range of active learning opportunities children can experience.

The air conditioning in many rooms provides a noisy backdrop and many students struggle to make themselves heard when answering questions or presenting their ideas. The school has updated the ICT and science laboratories and these are now modern and well equipped. The library is being developed as a welcoming and comfortable area for students to explore its well-stocked shelves. Access for students and adults with restricted mobility is very difficult as there are few ramps and no lifts to the higher floors. In response to the needs of a student who has impaired mobility, the school has moved her base class to the ground floor.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resources for learning are satisfactory. Teachers are sufficient in number to deliver the curriculum; some lack the pedagogical skills needed to engage students in learning relevant to the 21st century. Some teachers in the English department do not have the grammatical or phonological expertise to provide students with accurate models of the target language. There are no teaching assistants in KG and this results in children receiving insufficient support from a trained adult.

The school relies heavily on the purchased textbook schemes of work to deliver the curriculum. On-line resources are available to supplement the use of textbooks; this does little to extend the curriculum. Resources for ICT delivered in the 2 computer suites are good. Digital resources in the classroom are limited to the data-show projectors. Students have very limited access to laptops, tablets or other modern technologies in the classroom, which limits the range of possible learning strategies. The library has 5 stand-alone computers; these are not connected to the internet and remain unused.

The lack of space in some KG classes restricts the range of 'out-of-seat' activities that can take place, and there is little opportunity to create themed learning centres. Practical equipment is available in classrooms and children have

opportunities for sand and water play. Staff have sought to minimise the lack of space in KG classes by using the surrounding corridors and hallways to create centres for imaginative play. Ratios of staff to children in KG are high and in excess of 1:20, so that teachers are often distracted from their primary role in order to help children with their personal care needs.

Resources for sports and recreation are good. The sports hall and shaded areas provide opportunities for team games. The large shaded area has a good quality cushioned flooring. The school's own heritage centres are well equipped and provide students with clear visual reminders of how their society has changed over the years. Students use the traditional seating areas to meet with their friends and chat during break-times.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. The school has a knowledgeable and experienced leadership team ably supported by advisers from the FDF. Together school leaders and advisers from the FDF provide the school with strong, principled and effective leadership. The school has a clear sense of direction and understands its popularity with parents. The FDF directs funds strategically to support the school. Finances are sound and governance strong.

The principal and senior leaders have provided a consistent presence in the school since the last inspection and have put into place effective processes for monitoring all aspects of school life. The senior staff team have the expertise and drive to continue the process of improvement. There is a regular PD programme targeted to specific groups of teachers depending on their needs. Senior leaders have sought to monitor the impact of PD on classroom practice. Some of the impact of this programme is lost when staff move on to other schools

The school has an accurate view of the quality of education it provides. The self-evaluation form (SEF) was completed collaboratively by all staff, is very detailed and largely accurate. The associated school development plan (SDP) involved parental contribution; it correctly pinpoints the strategies that are likely to bring about improvement and identifies appropriate timelines, costings, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. There are satisfactory and improving processes for the formal observation of lessons. Curriculum coordinators and senior managers undertake formal observations and these form a regular part of the school's quality improvement procedures. Staff feel supported by this process and there is a reasonable balance in observations between the skills of the teacher and the response of the students. Occasionally, recommendations for improvement following observations lack clarity.

The school has developed very strong links with its parents. There were many responses to the parent questionnaire and these portray loyalty to the school's aims. A small number of parents reported that the school did not inform them sufficiently about their child's progress.

Progress since the last inspection

The principal and senior leaders have succeeded in ensuring that all staff are aware of the need to review their performance and adapt to the changing expectations and the increasingly challenging demands of the curriculum. The school has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations made in the previous inspection. Progress might have been greater if staff turnover had not meant that a constant flow of new teachers needed training to meet the school's expectations for instructional practice.

The school has made satisfactory progress in raising students' levels of attainment to match international standards. Their increasingly competent use of English enables them to access the curricular demands of science and mathematics. The school has strengthened procedures for formally monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Senior staff regularly observe lessons to gauge the impact of PD. Much of the PD over the last 2 years has focused on helping teachers see the need for differentiation in their lessons and providing the training they require to make this happen. Differentiation is now a part of the planning for most teachers; this is not yet a consistently effective feature.

The school has reviewed its provision for KG students and has taken some steps to improve the experience of children in KG. The introduction of sand and water into classroom practice and in a play setting has developed children's tactile learning. There is now more practical equipment in KG classes and this has reduced the over-reliance of workbooks and worksheets. Further progress in making KG a fully effective learning environment is hindered by the lack of additional adults to support the class teacher.

The school has made good progress in recognising and generating parental involvement. Parents have elected a 14 person 'Parent Council' which meets regularly to discuss issues related to school administration and student welfare. Most parents believe the school hears what they have to say and treats them as partners.

The school has clearly demonstrated the good capacity to make further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Implement international benchmarking tests in the American band that will allow for the assessment of students' attainment, the tracking of their progress and setting targets for student progress.
2. The effective implementation of 21st century skills by:
 - i. ensuring that staff in all subjects have the knowledge and skills to design and set investigative projects
 - ii. knowing when and how to employ higher order questioning skills
 - iii. planning opportunities for students to make choices about their learning, from KG onwards.
3. Improve staffing ratios in KG classes so that:
 - i. children receive more individual support from trained adults
 - ii. more children can be engaged in active learning
 - iii. there are increased opportunities for informal assessments.
4. Increase the availability and utilization of digital technologies by:
 - i. making a range of tablets and netbooks available within classrooms
 - ii. further encouraging students to bring their own devices to school
 - iii. establishing an on-line curriculum platform that students and parents can access at home.
5. Ensure that teachers consistently provide sufficient stretch and challenge for all students by:
 - i. identifying those classes where effective differentiation provides a model of best practice
 - ii. providing well-matched extension activities that challenge more able students
 - iii. providing clearer guidance to teachers on the implementation of IEPs in the classroom.

Inspection Grades

Performance Standard	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
	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								