



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



Inspection Report

Al Dar Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Dar Private School

Inspection Date	3 – 6 March 2014
School ID#	138
MOE	Ministry of Education (MOE)
Number of Students	524
Age Range	3 to 19 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Asmaa Abd Alazeem
School Address	Musaibeekh, Al Foaa, Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 783 2215
Fax Number	+971 (0)3 783 2217
Official Email (ADEC)	aldar.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	24 – 27 September 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 C; GRADE 6

The main strengths of the school are:

- students develop a sound understanding of UAE culture, traditions and heritage
- the school benefits from strong support from parents and the local community
- the school provides a caring environment for students.

The main areas for improvement are:

- strengthening teaching, in order to bring standards closer to international expectations in key subjects,
- procedures for reviewing the overall performance of the school, especially
- reviewing of all elements of KG
- provision of a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all students

Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 70 lessons, and conducted meetings with senior staff, school co-ordinators, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results and scrutinised students' work across the school. They considered the 21 responses to the parents' questionnaire and many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal was involved throughout the inspection process. She and the vice-principal undertook joint lesson observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

Al Dar Private School was established in 2006 and is located in the Al Foaa district, on the outskirts of Al Ain. The school is situated in an isolated area on the edge of the city with no other buildings nearby and some students travel as much as 60 km from remote quarters to reach the school. It aims 'to provide a safe learning environment and stimulating learning processes, and to graduate students proud of their identity and their homeland'.

The number on roll has risen considerably from 260 in 2010 to the current roll of 524 students, of which, 75% of the students are expatriates, 55% of the students are boys, 69% are Arabs, and all are Muslim. Among the 20 different nationalities represented, the largest group of students are Emirati (23%), Egyptian (25%), Syrian (16%), Palestinian (8%), Sudanese (7%), Jordanian (6%) and Omani (5%). The kindergarten (KG) has 109 children, grades 1-5 has 199 students and there are 216 students in grades 6-12. There are no girls in grade 11. There is a significant amount of student mobility as a result of parents relocating for employment reasons. The school follows the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. The school has identified 4 students with special educational needs (SEN), and none who are gifted and talented.

Fees are in the affordable to low category, ranging from AED 5,100 for KG1 to AED 12,600 for grade 12. The entrance examinations and tests are used only to assign students to grade groups. There is a board of governors, including the owner, the principal and parents. Staff turnover has been high in the last 2 years.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Attainment is unsatisfactory. It is below age-related expectations against the MoE curriculum and well below international standards. Standards show little signs of improvement because students' progress is slow in most grades in Arabic, English, mathematics, Islamic education and science. Attainment in Arabic and English literacy is low. Progress is satisfactory in social studies. Weak provision in KG means that students make little progress and begin grade 1 from a low starting point. The school only has MoE test data for the previous 2 years on record. Results have fluctuated and there is a recent decline in performance. The school does not undertake systematic analysis of attainment data and is not sufficiently clear about the causes of fluctuations in performance. Girls out-perform boys in almost all subjects. There is no evaluation of the performance of different groups or grades, and no understanding of why the results are not rising. As a consequence, the school does not set targets to raise achievement for the school as a whole school or for individual students.

In Arabic, many children in KG find difficulty in recognising the shapes and sounds of letters. As they move through the school to Grade 5, students can read short texts though some still struggle to read long sentences. Students have an inadequate understanding of basic grammar and cannot speak confidently. Their writing skills are underdeveloped. By grade 9, most students can understand short texts and answer questions on them. Their basic Arabic grammar and speaking skills are adequate. They lack the capacity to write short or extended texts. Students in the highest grades cannot express their ideas well in Arabic or engage in discussion as their grammar is weak. Writing skills remain underdeveloped, and students find it difficult to read literary texts critically.

In English, standards in speaking and listening are stronger than those in reading and writing. Girls do better than boys. KG children struggle to speak clearly and do not learn how to blend sounds correctly. Writing is limited to single words or copied sentences. Standards in the highest grades are variable. Some students can speak to an audience clearly about their own experiences. Others find it difficult to utter more than a few brief words. Few students can write at any length.

In Islamic education, KG children know Islamic greetings, the name of the prophet and can repeat short parts of Qur'anic 'Surahs'. By grade 9, most students in Islamic education can define 'Sunnah Nabawia'. Their understanding of how to apply the tenets of Islam to their lives is limited. Older students show more in-depth knowledge.

Attainment and progress in social studies are stronger. KG children develop an adequate knowledge of basic UAE national identity, heritage and values. Grade 12 students are aware of historical events such as Britain's occupation of the Gulf. They show some understanding of the different factors that drove events.

Attainment and progress in mathematics is less strong. KG children learn to count numbers in sequence and to make number shapes. By grade 12, the more able students are able to make algebraic plots around a point. Others still struggle with basic number work and mental arithmetic. Standards in mathematics are typically at least a year below those expected internationally.

In science, KG children learn some basic facts about the water cycle. They do not learn how to do even simple investigations, for example concerning how plants grow. Between grades 1 and 9, students acquire some scientific knowledge; they do not develop investigative skills through practical work. Even Grade 12 students have little experience of the principles of fair testing or of testing a hypothesis against specific observations.

Students' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are unsatisfactory. They have limited opportunities to apply their ICT skills across the curriculum and standards are well below those expected internationally. Their progress in art and physical education (PE) is unsatisfactory.

Students do not develop the skills they need for their careers. They have little opportunity to work collaboratively, undertake research or present information to others. Thinking skills are not well developed. The attainment and progress of higher and lower ability students is restricted by insufficient appropriate levels of challenge and support.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development has some strong features. Many students, especially girls, enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn, which is demonstrated by the satisfactory attendance levels at 93%. In assemblies, students show they are proud to be in the UAE, including those students who are not UAE nationals. They sing the national anthem and salute the flag enthusiastically. Students from different cultures co-operate well. Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school and that they feel safe and secure. They show a limited understanding of how to develop healthy lifestyles and many choose sweets and chocolate for their break time snacks. Students fail to develop leadership skills because the school offers them few opportunities to do so. The Student Council meets infrequently and has little impact on school life. KG children do not develop their personal and social skills effectively. Many older students lack self-confidence. They are not strong, independent learners and have

few skills in collaborative working, critical thinking or problem solving. As a result, they are not well prepared for the next stage in their lives.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is varied across the school. It is unsatisfactory overall. There is too much didactic teaching and students are rarely involved as active learners. In the KG, most teachers do not understand how to teach very young children, and fail to provide them with rich and varied opportunities to learn. Many children quickly lose interest in their lessons. They run around the room, scuffle with each other or throw equipment about. Classroom assistants do little to help learning or deal with poor behaviour. The teaching of English in the KG is particularly weak. Teachers are not fluent speakers themselves and model letter sounds poorly. Vocabulary building often consists of endless repetition of the same word. Children call answers out together and teachers do not check on whether individual children have learned anything.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and many appear more confident in dealing with older students. Activities in class are heavily dependent on textbooks and worksheets, although some teachers make effective use of data show. Students have no opportunity to use ICT in other subject areas. They are not asked to work together to solve problems or to carry out investigations. Students' work in science rarely takes place in the laboratory. Relationships are positive in many classrooms and students are eager to learn. Participation is frequently limited to answering simple closed questions and copying from the board or textbooks. Teachers rarely ask challenging questions. They expect little from students and do not give them time to think or explore ideas in greater depth. There is no planning to ensure that tasks match the different learning needs of students. Books are marked infrequently. Teachers do not build the assessment of learning into lessons in order to check individual students' work or understanding. They do not set targets for improvement or provide students with guidance on how to make better progress. Classroom displays are poor, especially in the smaller rooms. It is rare for displays to feature students' work.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum lacks breadth and balance. It is unsatisfactory for the school as a whole, and very unsatisfactory in KG. Here teacher talk dominates the way learning is planned. Children's involvement is often restricted to shouting one-word answers to closed questions. Typical activities are limited to colouring in, playing with bricks, lollipop sticks or cups, and rolling out play-dough. Children are not given opportunities to learn through play or experimentation. From grade 1 onwards the curriculum helps students to develop an appropriate understanding

of UAE culture, heritage and traditions. There is little provision for art or physical education (PE). Provision in core subjects is driven by textbooks and fails to provide opportunities for problem-solving, research and collaborative learning. Students are given no chance to apply their skills in ICT to work in other subjects. The curriculum planning and delivery takes no account of the needs of SEN students or higher attainers because the school 'does not wish to pick them out'. There are some visits to places of interest. Students go on field trips and visit the fair. They participate in chess and art competitions, and the boys play tournament football. An English Club has recently been established. The school uses the laboratories in another local school in order to boost science provision. The school week is significantly shorter than the formal MoE requirements. All grades above KG have 25 hours per week of class time. In grades 1-5, this means that students have 2 hours less teaching than they should, and in grades 6-12, this rises to 4. The shortfall has a negative impact on standards.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has a climate of care and support which is valued by students and parents. The analysis of the very small number of parent questionnaires received indicated strong support for the school. First aid provision is satisfactory. The nurse provides appropriate health awareness sessions for students in class. Staff have not been fully briefed on the child protection policy and procedures. Students say they know whom to approach if they have personal concerns. Social workers deal with issues between students effectively. Staff follow up absence and lateness on the day it occurs. The school does little to analyse patterns of attendance for groups or individuals in order to identify and address any trends. There is now a prayer room for students but the timetable does not allow time for students to go and pray. Students with special needs receive insufficient support regarding their academic progress. Preparation for life after school is unsatisfactory. Careers advice for older students in regard to employment opportunities and further education is limited. There are no records kept of where students go to when they leave school.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school buildings and premises are clean and mostly provide a safe and healthy environment. There are some small hazards that compromise students' health and safety. These are being addressed by the premises staff. There are appropriate procedures for the maintenance of the school building. Accommodation is inadequate for the number of classes. Many classrooms are cramped and not conducive to active or joyful learning. Those in the KG are particularly inappropriate. They are too small to create separate stations for

learning and have no direct access to outdoor play and stimulus areas. There are few displays of students' work. The school library and science laboratory are both small and seldom used. The main gate is kept locked during school hours. Security is casual. Gates are open at the end of the day which allows parents and others to enter the site unchecked. A new grassed area has been provided although this is almost exclusively used by boys playing football. The shaded area on the boys' side is attached to the school building and is extensive enough for the number of students. The girls' side is some distance from the school and has limited seating. There is a shaded KG play area even further away. Other parts of the outside are largely bare and sandy. There are insufficient toilets for both adults and students, and those in the KG are the wrong size. There are no specialist rooms for either music or art. There are no facilities for indoor PE. There is no disabled access for students with physical difficulties. Overall the school's buildings and premises are unsatisfactory.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school's resources are unsatisfactory. The adequate number of appropriately qualified teachers only includes 1 specialist KG member of staff. Classrooms have very limited resources other than textbooks, worksheets and colouring items. Displays of students' work are rare and of poor quality. The school has invested in 'data show' projectors for all classrooms and laptops for teachers. The computers in the ICT lab have recently been upgraded. The only computers in classrooms are those used by teachers. The library is rarely used. Its stock of books has recently been enhanced. The small science laboratory is under-resourced and under-used. Many science lessons take place in classrooms. Insufficient PE resources and facilities mean that students have few opportunities to develop skills and personal fitness. The school clinic has an appropriate range of medicines and equipment. Medicines and other chemicals are stored safely. Buses are old and sometimes overcrowded. The few seatbelts are seldom used. The food sold by the school canteen is healthy and hygienically prepared. There is no dining hall and outside areas have insufficient shade and inadequate seating, especially on the girls' side. There are few resources for SEN students.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school is organised and managed smoothly on a day to day basis. The principal and senior leadership team work well with the community. Parents are very supportive and feel that the school listens to their views. Students feel that their views are listened to but not acted on. The proprietor supports the school well and has a high vision for education.

Strategic leadership for improvement is unsatisfactory. Self-evaluation and strategic planning lack clear focus, logical structure and priorities. The self-evaluation form (SEF) is over-optimistic in all standards and contains limited and confused evidence. As a result, planning is not effective in addressing key weaknesses. Budget management is sound. The school has not undertaken a systematic analysis of test data. Senior managers do not clearly know the relative performance in subject areas or of groups within the school. They do not analyse trends in performance over time. There are no precise targets for improving student attainment. The school has provided some professional development for teachers in partnership with Al Ain University College of Education. For example, training has been provided on the use of data shows, differentiation and modern classroom management. This has had little impact on student learning. The principal and vice-principal undertake lesson observations. These are not sufficiently rigorous in identifying the impact of professional development. They do not identify how well individuals and groups of students are learning.

Senior leaders are aware of the very unsatisfactory provision for KG children. Plans for a new building on the site to address this issue are at an advanced stage. There are few long-term strategies to improve KG provision in terms of teaching, curriculum and resources.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has made some improvements since the last inspection. There is a prayer room, although there is no provision in the timetable for students to pray. Girls and KG children now have shaded spaces for assembly and play. These are too far from the main building. There are regular fire drills and chemicals are safely stored. The stock of computers has been updated and all classrooms have been equipped with data show facilities. Teachers have been trained in using these facilities. More guidance is required for them to be fully effective in the classroom. There is now a grassed football pitch and there are specialised areas for basketball and volleyball. The number of trips and links has shown a small rise. There is now a Trustees' Council which acts as a governing body. Its impact on strategic management is not clear. The school has developed a child protection policy. Staff have not been fully briefed on associated procedures. Social workers have been employed for both boys and girls. There is regular lesson monitoring by senior leaders. This currently has insufficient focus on impact in the classroom and outcomes for students.

Senior leaders in the school are clearly committed to improvement. They require further support with self-evaluation and other aspects of strategic leadership in order for them to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Strengthen teaching, in order to bring standards closer to international expectations in key subjects, by:
 - i. providing opportunities for students to learn actively through discussion, research and practical work
 - ii. ensuring that teachers do not talk for too long
 - iii. using higher order questioning, and giving students time to think and explore ideas in greater depth
 - iv. matching classroom tasks to students' learning needs in order to provide sufficient challenge for all abilities
 - v. increasing the marking of students' work, providing them with feedback and targets for improvement.
2. Improve procedures for reviewing the overall performance of the school, especially by:
 - i. identifying how well the school is doing in each examination subject area and in each grade group
 - ii. determining trends and performance over time
 - iii. setting precise targets for improvement for the school, for subjects and for individual students
 - iv. ensuring that school self-evaluation and school development planning is more closely aligned to the descriptions for each Irtiqa'a standard.
3. Improve all elements of KG provision by:
 - i. employing teachers with specialist knowledge of this age group
 - ii. offering a curriculum which develops children's key skills and helps them to become confident, independent learners
 - iii. ensuring that classrooms are provided with a wide range of age-appropriate resources
 - iv. providing children with adequate space for play-based learning and direct access to outdoor activity.
4. Provide a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of all students and which is closer to formal MoE curriculum requirements by:
 - i. increasing the amount of lesson time per week, particularly in the secondary grades
 - ii. adapting the curriculum consistently to take account of the needs of all students, including those of the highest and lowest ability
 - iii. ensuring adequate provision for art and high-quality PE.

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								
Overall effectiveness								