



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Dhabiania Private School

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Iqraa

Al Dhabiania Private School

Inspection Date	14 th – 17 th April, 2013
School ID#	182
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education (G4 – G12) American text and materials based curriculum (KG- G3)
Number of Students	1500
Age Range	KG – Grade 12
Gender	KG – G3 (mixed classes)- G4 – G12 (girls only)
Principal	Hamda Ahmad Moharie
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors. Inspectors observed 78 lessons and other student activities, scrutinised students' written work, analysed student and school performance data and studied school documents. They also talked with staff, Family Development Federation staff and students.

Description of the School

Al Dhabiania Private School was founded in 1985 and is situated in the Al Khalidiyah area of Abu Dhabi, close to the city centre. The aims of the school include the intention to ensure students reach high educational standards and are able to use modern technology within their work. Students come from middle or high earning parents. From KG to Grade 3, the school delivers a curriculum in English which is based on American text books. From Grade 4 to 12, the MOE curriculum is taught.

Classes in KG to Grade 3 are mixed boys and girls and Grades 4 to 12 are girls only. There are 315 children in KG, 655 in Grades 1 to 6 and 530 in Grades 6 to 12. In total, there are 313 boys and 1187 girls, making a total of 1500 in the school. Students are all Muslim and come from different nationalities: 22% Emirati, 5% from other Gulf countries, 22% Egypt, 18% Jordan 16% Syria, with smaller numbers from other backgrounds. No students are identified with special educational needs or gifted and talented.

Teachers use formal and informal tests to assess all students prior to enrolment. Students with additional learning needs are not normally admitted. Annual school fees are low and range from AED 7,036 in KG1 to AED 12,870 in Grade 12, exclusive of books and transport. Teachers' salaries are also low, ranging from AED 4,400 to AED 6,000 per month. The school is one of a group of four schools owned by the Family Development Foundation (FDF). Advisers from the FDF advise the principal and support many aspects of the school's on-going development.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged Al Dhabiania Private School to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The previous inspection report said the vast majority of students achieve the pass mark in the undemanding national MoE tests, but these outcomes are well below international standards. More recent assessment data from semester 1 of the current school year and work seen during the inspection indicate that this continues to be the case. 2012 examination data shows that overall standards

were above the MoE average. Grade 12 students in the literary stream do particularly well compared to their peers elsewhere, especially in physics, biology, English and mathematics.

Standards in Arabic, social studies, English, mathematics and the sciences remain below the best international standards. This is because teachers do not adapt class work to meet students' individual needs or develop the basic MoE curriculum. Teachers rely too much on the standard work books and often provide the same worksheets for all students, regardless of their individual ability. While students' ability to read and listen to Arabic is satisfactory, their skills in speaking and writing are below average. This is because too many teachers do not themselves speak Standard Arabic and their written grammatical knowledge is weak. Standards in Islamic Studies are average because the quality of teaching is higher and students find the work interesting. They understand, for example, the main events in the Prophet Mohammed's life and read the Qur'an using the correct 'Tajweed' rules.

The standard of students' information and communication technology (ICT) work is below average. This is because cross curricular ICT links are weak and students rarely use computers in school. All students make satisfactory progress in acquiring the basic skills required for learning, such as reading, writing and numeracy. Students with special educational needs and high attainers make very slow progress because the work provides inappropriate levels of challenge.

The majority of students are sensible and polite. They enjoy being at school and are proud of their UAE heritage. Students like their teachers and speak highly of the help and support they receive. While most students have positive attitudes to learning, few are curious or innovative thinkers. Students are more compliant than confident and rarely pose questions of their own. Their ability to work as part of a group is strengthening. They willingly identify individual roles and value each other's contributions. There are some useful opportunities for students to accept personal responsibility, such as serving on the school council, or as class and library representative. Students relish these but say there are insufficient opportunities. While attendance figures for 2011/12 were unavailable the figure given for February 2013 was 95%. This was not supported by any documentation and attendance seen during the inspection was lower.

Teachers' have good subject knowledge and students learn within a calm and supportive atmosphere. Some of the more adventurous students are willing to respond in lessons, and accept that they may make mistakes in front of their classmates. While a few forget to put their hands up and call out during lessons,

the majority are compliant and listen attentively, although passively, to their teacher. The majority of students learn the required facts but are not developing the analytical skills needed to interpret information, make connections and form hypotheses of their own. During lessons, teachers rarely give students opportunities to speak at length and their contributions are often limited to only a few words.

Some teachers are responding to recent training sessions such as providing clear learning objectives and group work as well as using assessment results in order to plan work that meets students' individual needs. Lesson planning is increasingly systematic. Teachers use a standardised template that requires them, for example, to specify three different levels of learning outcomes for each lesson. Despite this, much of the teaching remains traditional with the whole class following the workbook. In addition, most teachers do not set individual or group targets for improvement, and do not identify students with learning needs. While more able students may receive additional worksheets and individual learning support plans are in place for less able students, the lack of classroom support staff means these students do not receive the support they need. In many lessons, teachers use few additional resources, visual aids or technology to enliven learning.

FDF advisers are working increasingly closely with teachers to broaden the curriculum and strengthen lesson planning. This is helping to eliminate repetition and improve the extent to which the curriculum meets students' individual needs. For example, there is now a structured calendar for each subject which details the work that will be covered during the year. Pacing charts are also available to help teachers ensure curriculum progression, use assessment data and make the most effective use of the available learning resources. The school invites students who need support in, for example, mathematics or English, to attend additional classes after school. These initiatives are relatively recent and there has been insufficient time for them to have had a significant impact upon student outcomes.

The KG curriculum remains overly formal and includes limited opportunities for children to choose their own activity. The school day is very structured and children are unable to go outside, even during playtime. While classroom activities have some appeal to children, they usually involve rote repetition and recall. There are no classroom assistants and this adversely affects children's learning and language development. Teachers usually compensate by providing whole-class activities and these frequently lack appropriate challenge. The school provides limited learning resources in quality and quantity and teachers make many of their own. Children are not given opportunities to learn through

structured play and few activities encourage children's creativity. For example, KG2 children are required to colour in a picture of a frog using exactly the same colours and techniques as the teacher's example. As a result, children in KG make unsatisfactory progress with their verbal communication and personal, physical and creative development.

While there have been recent improvements to curriculum planning, it remains too narrow and is largely limited to the acquisition and recall of facts. There are few opportunities for students to develop key skills through, for example, problem solving, investigative science or the regular use of ICT. Extracurricular activities such as supporting Red Crescent and sporting activities organised through the FDF are offered, yet relatively few students choose to take part in these. The school encourages talented students to participate in community events such as an annual debating competition but these activities also involve few students. The physical education curriculum is very limited and music is not taught beyond Grade 2.

The school makes all the required checks when recruiting staff and there are well-organised arrangements for first aid and the dispensing of medicines. The child protection policy is well understood and students say they feel very safe in school. Bullying is not a problem and the school manages any such incidents well. Although students say they are well cared for during the school day, they receive limited advice regarding university applications and future careers. Grade 12 students attend an exhibition attended by local universities but students from other countries receive no such help. They do not visit any universities and say there are no links with local businesses or employers. Students are therefore inadequately prepared for life after they leave school. The school does not monitor or analyse attendance data effectively and only contacts parents on the second day of an unexplained absence.

The school occupies a purpose built building. It is safe, clean, tidy and well-maintained. There have been several improvements since the last inspection. Fire drills are conducted regularly and potentially dangerous substances are stored safely. All KG classes are located on the ground floor and a new purpose built ICT suite and science laboratory have recently been opened. The school is also able to use facilities such as an auditorium within the adjacent FDF building. Several shortcomings mentioned by the last inspection remain. For example, there are still occasional lapses in security and visitors can enter the school unnoticed. The new science laboratory is insufficient for four science subjects and the number of students in Grade 6 to 12. KG children still have no access to outdoor play and learning areas, and facilities for physical education remain unsatisfactory. Indoor

and outdoor areas are restricted in size and outdoor areas are hard paved. This has the potential to cause serious injury should a student fall or trip. The overall standard of display is uninspiring. Classrooms are bleak, featuring few displays of students' work or curricular information.

There have been some improvements to the quality and quantity of learning resources since the previous inspection. For example, projectors are now installed in every classroom and each teacher has a laptop. The canteen is fully licensed and very clean. Many other learning resources remain limited in range, quality and appeal. For example, the almost complete lack of technology for students' use during lessons is restricting learning. There is insufficient scientific equipment to allow students to undertake first hand investigations and classroom resources are often limited to the MoE work book. The single computer in the school library is only for use by staff. The lack of access to newspapers, current periodicals and the internet is restricting students' ability to develop intellectually and personally. The school does not employ any classroom assistants. Teachers in KG and the lower grades therefore manage classes singlehandedly and this is adversely affecting the range of activities.

Following the most recent monitoring visit and subsequent report, the FDF significantly increased the level of support provided to the school. The FDF has also created a school development division and its advisers are playing a major role in improving key areas such as teaching, curriculum, staff training, health and safety and leadership. Working closely with the principal and senior leaders, they are helping the leadership to develop the skills needed to underpin the school's on-going improvement. In addition, the FDF has recently engaged an educational consultancy to oversee the compilation of a comprehensive school improvement plan.

FDF advisers have a realistic and objective view of the school's effectiveness and the impact of their involvement is obvious. Improvements are evident in the systems and procedures. For example, the FDF uses ADEC criteria to hold the principal and senior leaders to account. Teachers now have individual development plans and professional training is tailored to meet their needs. There is a new, structured system for checking lesson planning and observations, in order to monitor the impact of professional development on classroom practice. Responsibilities are increasingly distributed between the principal, vice principals and subject leaders. These systems reflect best international practice and many changes have been introduced during the current school year. Whilst there has been limited time for them to have had an impact on student outcomes, the inspection has noted improvements to many areas of the school's work.

Fees are low, as are teachers' salaries. Staff turnover is average, even though the school finds it difficult to match salaries paid within government schools. Parental questionnaires indicate that most are happy with the school. One area of concern is the introduction of the MoE curriculum to all grades, as many parents would like the American-based curriculum to remain.

The school has started to improve the quality of education but there is still a long way to go. Self-evaluation remains overly generous as each performance standard is judged as outstanding or very good. Data analysis is insufficiently effective and does not closely monitor attendance or students' progress. Additionally, it does not identify and address differences in learning between students of different nationalities or ability groups. The FDF has not yet delegated any budget responsibility. The principal welcomes FDF involvement and is pleased to see the resulting improvements to the quality of education. The school remains highly dependent on FDF input and lacks the capacity to continue improvement work without support. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise standards in all subjects by ensuring teachers use assessment information to monitor students' progress and adapt the curriculum and teaching to meet individual learning needs, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented
2. Develop students' 21st Century skills so that they are well prepared for further education and employment
3. Improve the quality, range and appeal of learning resources in order to enrich the curriculum and learning activities
4. Ensure KG children have access to a safe, shaded outdoor space for learning and play
5. Provide adequate staffing, especially in KG to Grade 3, to support age-appropriate teaching and learning activities and development.