



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Nash'e Assaleh Private School

Published in 2013

Iqraa

Al Nash'e Assaleh Private School

Inspection Date	20 th –24 th April 2012
School ID#	145
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	American
Number of Students	698
Age Range	KG1–Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Mahara Al Mameiri
School Address	Al Tuwaiia, Al Ain
Telephone Number	(+971) 03 7630444
Fax Number	(+971) 03 762 5405
Email (ADEC)	alnasheassaleh.pvt@adec.ac

Introduction

The school was inspected by four inspectors. They observed 83 lessons, attended assemblies and met with groups of students and the subject leadership team. Inspectors also met with members of the school board, a group of parents and the administration and health care staff, and examined 146 parental questionnaires. The inspectors considered the ethos of the school, the students' learning experiences, personal development and progress, and the quality of teaching and how well this helps the students to learn. Two trainee Emirate inspectors also took part in the inspection.

Description of the School

The school moved into its current purpose-built accommodation on an enclosed site in 2004. Its motto is 'Looking to the future, while remaining true to values and traditions.' It originally opened as a kindergarten in 1994, and has expanded each year as the students got older. There are now 570 students in KG to grade 6, and 128 in grades 7 to 12. Boys and girls are taught together in KG and grades 1 and 2, and then in single-sex classes. Virtually all the students are from the UAE. All are Arabic and all but three are Muslim. These three students speak English, which is the language of instruction. The school has identified 23 children as having special educational needs. These are mainly physical but a small minority have emotional difficulties. These students are mentored and helped by the school's social workers.

Admission is by examination from grades 2 to 12, and by interview for KG and grades 1 and 2. School fees are in the medium to high bracket, and range from AED 9000 in KG to AED 26000 in Grade 12. Teachers are paid between AED 3000 and AED 10000, which is towards the lower end of salary scales. The school teaches an American type curriculum in all grades, and a parallel Montessori curriculum in KG and grades 1 and 2.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

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

The school has made poor progress since the last inspection. The principal, who has led the school since it opened, is aware of this and has responded by appointing key subject leaders and creating a school improvement department to address the issues identified. She is keen to see the school improve, and with the heads of department has started to review its performance. As yet this work is not sufficiently well focused, and makes no use of data analysis to raise standards.

The school improvement plan is too long and places too much emphasis on the completion of tasks rather than student outcomes. Senior staff have started to observe lessons and give feedback to teachers. This is having little impact because they do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of what high-quality teaching looks like. Subject leaders now hold departmental meetings that are increasingly focused on raising the quality of teaching and engaging students more in their learning. The principal has made plans to use the skills of the newly-appointed head of English to raise the standards of spoken English at the school. Despite such initiatives, the extent of improvement still required and the relatively high fees mean the school provides unsatisfactory value for money, and has little capacity to improve without external support.

Standards and progress are low in English, information and communication technology (ICT), science, history, art, social studies and physical education compared to international standards. They are satisfactory in mathematics, Arabic and Islamic studies. Across the school, boys do not do as well as girls because of poor behaviour and a lack of self-motivation. The school is aware of this but has done nothing to address the problem, and puts it down to 'cultural issues'. In English and science, students are not able to express themselves and acquire new language effectively because the teachers do not have the skills to model the language correctly. In all subjects, students are not given enough opportunity to apply the knowledge they gain from the textbooks and workbooks. In the KG classes the children learn to form the shapes of letters by tracing and colouring. They do not have enough opportunities to develop their language skills by singing, playing together or taking part in meaningful role-play. In all classes, students rarely have the chance to work independently, engage in their own research, express their views, or use ICT to support their learning.

Attainment in tests and teacher assessments is broadly in line with those expected by similar schools but the reliability of test data is insecure. Standards in science and English are below those expected internationally. The topics the students study are in line with those expected in the US core standards, but they are undermined by too much reliance on the textbooks and too few individual, group and extension tasks. The school sets and marks its own internal tests, so it is unable to compare students' progress with the rates seen in other similar schools. In examinations, the high level of scores seen in data is not reflected in the work seen in the classroom. This is because students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop skills due to the rigid nature of the curriculum and the lack of opportunity for discussion and debate. The more-able students complete their work first and are not routinely given any additional tasks to extend their learning. Support for students with special educational needs is limited to weekly

withdrawal sessions and extra classes after school and at weekends. In the classroom, they are expected to undertake exactly the same task as other, more-able students. In the younger classrooms teachers are supported by classroom assistants. This valuable resource is not used to best effect, as their roles are unclear.

Many students stay at the school for the whole of their school lives, although some leave at the end of KG when parents choose to send them to free government schools. Some say they 'love' attending. Behaviour in classrooms is generally acceptable but girls behave better than boys. Occasionally the behaviour of boys in classrooms, corridors and the sports hall is unacceptably boisterous, and at break times adult staff struggle to maintain order in the boys' playground. The school council members are confident when speaking to inspectors and taking assemblies. This confidence is not always reflected in their learning because they are not given enough opportunity to develop independence. The students develop a good understanding of the heritage and values of the UAE and have well-developed understanding of moral values. They remember fondly the 40th anniversary of the country and their part in National Day celebrations. The students really appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities, and say this is one of the strengths of the school. They are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle and the nurse is particularly proactive, recording students' body mass index and offering advice on diet and exercise. The principal takes a personal interest in the career pathways of her former students and knows exactly what they have gone on to do. Because of the intense examination preparation in the last two years of school, some students are able to access higher education without having to do a foundation year to improve their skills.

The quality of teaching is not good enough to enable the students to make the progress they are capable of. The lack of practical activities leads to some students, especially boys, becoming bored and failing to engage in lessons. Many teachers do not have a good enough command of spoken English to enable them to deliver the curriculum properly. They do not use questioning skills well enough, and ask too many questions that only demand a one-word answer. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge but base far too many activities rigidly on the textbooks and workbooks, and so students cannot develop their collaborative learning and thinking skills. Teachers have started to share learning objectives with the students by writing them on the whiteboard at the beginning of each lesson. They are not referred to during the lesson, and no reference is made to them at the end to check on students' understanding of what has been learnt. In

the KG classes children spend too much time sitting at desks, with not enough opportunities for them to learn through play.

The curriculum falls well short of the best international provision. It is reasonably broad, although there is no music and little time is devoted to art. The very small number of students in grades 11 and 12 has led to few course choices being offered. Some teachers are teaching subjects for which they have no qualifications or experience. The intensive support offered for TOEFL, ICDL and SAT preparation in Years 11 and 12 helps students prepare for the next steps in their education. The provision for students with special educational needs is not developed well enough to support their learning in class. The structure of the curriculum, and particularly the heavy reliance on sets of American and Montessori textbooks, inhibits the development of students' independent and wider learning skills. It fails to take account of the range of ability in classes and to build on what students already know. Students' understanding of the culture and life of the UAE is promoted through daily assemblies and the school's heritage area. The extensive extra-curricular activities offered are a notable strength of the school. On Thursday afternoons, students have access to a wide variety of stimulating activities that help to broaden and enrich their school life.

The school provides a safe environment for its students. Students are very positive about the school as one student said 'I love it... it's like my other home'. Each student has a home room teacher who is responsible for overseeing their personal and academic needs. This means students know who to turn to if they have concerns or worries. Girls say they are very well supported and have a female social worker to turn to. The lack of a male equivalent means that boys do not have the same level of personal support. The school makes sure that all staff have been passed by ADEC as suitable to be employed as teachers, although some are still waiting for their clearance to be returned. The school does not have a formal child protection policy. All entrances to the school are well controlled by security guards, and visitors have to sign in on arrival. Attendance is good. Rigorous following up of absences has helped to increase the level. The school does not analyse figures over a term or year to follow trends and patterns in absence. The system of rewards and sanctions is fair, but the practice of using withdrawal from lessons such as PE as a sanction is inappropriate. Students confirm that corporal punishment is forbidden and is not used. First aid facilities are managed and supervised well by the school nurse. A doctor visits once a week and students' health is checked annually. Visits from local colleges and universities help prepare students for life after they leave school at 16.

The buildings and premises provide a suitable environment to promote learning. Most classrooms are of suitable size but the science laboratories, library and art room are too small and limit learning in these subjects. Some rooms have been fitted with data projectors, and teachers are beginning to use them to enhance learning. Teachers have to provide their own laptops, and this limits the impact of these projectors when teachers do not have a suitable laptop to connect to them. The facilities for the provision of a break time snack are adequate for the boys but a too cramped for the girls to have easy access. The buildings are kept clean and tidy and checked on a daily basis. The staff member who has been designated as the health and safety officer ensures the school is well kept and safe for students. All electrical and fire-fighting equipment is checked regularly. Chemicals are kept securely locked away in the science laboratory and cleaning materials are stored out of students' reach. The school has designated one member of staff to direct cars coming to the school to drop off and collect students, and this helps keep them safe.

The overall quality and quantity of resources are adequate to support its aims. There are sufficient qualified teachers with adequate subject knowledge, and all staff now stay behind for one hour when the students have gone home to engage in activities to develop their teaching skills. In some cases their knowledge of spoken English is not good enough to deliver an American curriculum where English is the language of instruction. Some classrooms lack basic resources. This is a particular problem in the KG classes, where there are not enough materials to promote activity-based learning. As a result there are no dedicated subject areas, such as a role-play area or a science area, and there are no facilities for sand and water play or well-stocked book corners. The newly-built gymnasium is a good addition to the school's resources. As the school population increases the pressure on the time available in this building is beginning to limit the amount of PE available to some groups. The school buses are maintained regularly, but two do not have seat belts and the inspectors saw one instance of overcrowding.

Teachers and students are loyal to the school and relationships with parents are very good. They particularly like the 'open door' sessions every Thursday afternoon if they have worries or concerns. The school has a suitable system for dealing with parental complaints.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - i. developing the ability to evaluate the school and students' performance data;
 - ii. using the resulting information to produce a very sharply focused school improvement plan that clearly links activities and developments to students' standards; and
 - iii. ensuring that heads of department develop a real understanding of what good teaching looks like and promote this through modelling, classroom observations and feedback to raise standards.
2. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing focused training and resources to enable teachers to:
 - i. use a variety of teaching styles to ensure students are motivated, behave well and have opportunities to apply their learning. Provide more opportunities for play based learning in the KG;
 - ii. differentiate tasks in lessons to ensure the needs of all students are met, in particular the more able and those with special educational needs;
 - iii. improve the motivation and behaviour of boys; and
 - iv. improve the teachers' spoken English, so they can model language effectively.