



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Ekhlass Private School

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Iqraa

Al Ekhlass Private School

Inspection Date	1 st – 4 th October, 2012
School ID#	053
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	1081
Age Range	KG - Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Shawky Ahmed Madi
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 63 lessons, attended assemblies, and observed students arriving and leaving school and during break times. Inspectors met with the principal, vice-principal, subject leaders, teachers, students, parents and the owner's representative. They also visited the clinic, prayer rooms and specialist facilities. The inspectors analysed data from parent questionnaires, the school's data, self-evaluation and school improvement plan (SIP).

Description of the School

The school moved from a villa in Abu Dhabi to its present site in Baniyas East in September 2011. The school's aims are, 'to achieve a distinct educational performance, developing a creative generation of students committed to its values'. There are currently 1081 students on roll, 588 boys and 493 girls. There are 150 children in Kindergarten (KG), 460 in cycle 1, 233 in cycle 2 and 238 in cycle 3. Fifteen percent of the students are from the UAE, 19% are from Jordan, 13% are from Syria, 13% are Palestinian, 15% are Egyptian, 10% are Yemeni, 8% are Sudanese, 5% are Somali and 2% are from other countries. Almost all the students are Muslim. The school has identified 32 students who have a variety of special needs, which are mainly physical. The students come from a middle to lower socio-economic background. The school administers tests as part of the admissions procedure. Fees range from AED 9,200 to AED 19,900 and teachers' salaries range from AED 42,000 to AED 108,000 per year (average AED 51,000). The owner has appointed an advisory board for the school and the owner's personal representative is a frequent visitor to the school.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

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

In the last 12 months, the school's leadership has successfully managed the building improvement work to enable the school to transfer to its new premises. Despite the short period of time since the last inspection, the school has taken action to address health and safety issues identified in the report. Students have a positive attitude to learning because the school promotes satisfactory personal development. Their behaviour is appropriate and they learn to respect each other's culture.

Teaching is overly didactic; it does not sufficiently motivate and enthuse students and does not adequately develop learning skills. Attainment and progress do not compare favourably with international standards but are satisfactory when compared with schools delivering the same curriculum. The curriculum does not meet the wide range of students' learning needs throughout the school. For example, the Kindergarten (KG) curriculum does not reflect the developmental needs of young children.

The school buildings are safe, clean, tidy and generally well cared for. Overall, specialist facilities are adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum, except for the poorly resourced library. However, there are insufficient classroom resources to enable group and investigative work to take place. The culture and values of the UAE are appropriately promoted and students are cared for and protected. Guidance, to help students reach their potential, or to prepare them for the next stage of their education, is not strong. Students are not always provided with the necessary depth of support to adequately prepare them for the next stage in their education. Teachers do not always mark students' work constructively to help them to understand what they need to do to improve. Despite the fact that standards and progress remain unsatisfactory, the leadership team has started to put systems in place to address this. A School Improvement Plan (SIP) is in place, which is designed to ensure action towards meeting the shortcomings identified in the last inspection.

The school's test results are not yet secure and run the risk of being inaccurate. This is because, with the exception of older students, standardised tests are not used and therefore, on-going data from teacher assessment is not sufficiently objective or robust. Inspection evidence shows that in English, mathematics and Arabic, standards are below those expected internationally. In science, Islamic studies and social studies they are in line with such standards. In mathematics, students do acquire skills but are unable to apply their knowledge in different mathematical contexts. In Arabic, speaking skills are in line with standards expected but writing, reading and listening skills are weaker. Students of Islamic Studies are able to recite verses from the Qur'an and their attainment is in line with expectations. In English, students have a better command of the spoken word than of writing skills because they do not have enough opportunities to write at length. Students do not have the opportunity to study music, whilst lessons in physical education (PE) and art result in unsatisfactory attainment and progress in these subjects. Children in KG do not make sufficient progress because their activities, textbooks and workbooks do not cater for their needs. Students have a satisfactory knowledge of UAE culture, traditions and heritage. There is no difference between the attainment and progress of boys and girls, and students

of all nationalities make similar progress. Students demonstrate satisfactory skills in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) because they make good use of the two laboratories.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Boys and girls behave well in lessons and in the playground. In KG, some children become restless towards the end of sessions because the narrow curriculum does not engage and absorb them. Students demonstrate a good understanding of the diverse culture of the school and show respect for each other's views and opinions. The boys work well together on 'smile' days and KG children work very well on 'activity' days, when they have the opportunity to do a variety of inter related tasks. The school has established two cultural areas, one for boys and one for girls. Boys proudly take visitors into their Bedouin tent and give them coffee and traditional snacks. As a result of such activities the school is a harmonious community where students respond to the needs of others, as demonstrated through charitable collections. The school nurse works hard to ensure the students have a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy life-style. However, the weak curriculum and teaching which overly directs learning, does not enable development of independence and fails to prepare students for the next steps in their education.

Often, inaccurate assessment data is used by teachers. This limits their ability to plan work which appropriately meets the varied needs of students, especially the more able and those with special needs. This limits their learning and progress and is exacerbated by the lack of activities which excite and motivate students to learn. Feedback and marking is not sufficiently constructive to be of use to students. It does not provide individual guidance or specific comments about what is done well and precisely what needs to be done to improve. Since the last inspection, the school has appointed teaching assistants in KG, however they do not, as yet, make a discernible difference. This is because their role is unclear and they do not support children with their learning. Resources in nearly all rooms are limited to the Ministry of Education (MoE) text and workbook. When teachers do expand the curriculum beyond the textbook, attainment and progress are much better because students' interest is stimulated. This was evident, for example, when a variety of practical activities in KG were undertaken and when video clips of a musical 'rap' song about cell organelles was used in Grade 7 science. When learning objectives are shared, as in a good Arabic lesson observed, students concentrate hard and work well because they can see the point of their tasks. However, this is not a practice routinely adopted throughout the school.

Teachers enjoy working at the school and have started to receive relevant professional development. However, this is not linked closely enough to the

school's evaluation of teaching and learning to ensure that skills learnt translate into measurable improvement.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it is not tailored to student need and so restricts learning. The approach adopted to the MoE curriculum limits group and self-study because it is overly focused on textbooks. This results in too few opportunities to develop study skills, to work collaboratively or to pursue independent study. Basic skills acquired in English, mathematics, Arabic, social studies and ICT are not applied well across the curriculum; there is no cross-curricular coherent application of these skills which would extend and deepen learning. Science laboratories are used well and students undertake practical tasks, which makes a positive contribution to achievement in this subject. There are too few opportunities for activity and play-based learning in KG and thus does not reflect best practice in early years education. All students are expected to work at the same pace; this means that some are insufficiently challenged whilst other struggle. The school provides a wide range of extracurricular activities but the activities do not build appropriately on day-to-day classroom work.

Students receive satisfactory care and support and the school nurse and social worker work hard to fulfill their roles to the best of their ability. The school has a child-protection policy which is understood by all staff and does not allow corporal punishment. Students and parents understand the school's discipline policy; they believe it is fair and reasonable. Students do not receive effective academic support because marking is weak and there is very limited guidance about further education choices. Attendance is good and there is prompt follow up of any absences. Parents receive advice about how to ensure their children regularly attend school. The prayer facilities for boys and girls are adequate.

Overall, the school is not well enough resourced to effectively support its aims. There are sufficient, adequately resourced laboratories and ICT rooms but the library has too few books to support learning and study skills. Outdoor PE is catered for but there is nowhere for boys to do indoor PE. The canteen is clean and tidy. Electrical equipment is regularly tested and there are effective maintenance contracts in place. The extensive refurbishment of the premises ensures that the buildings are of a satisfactory standard. Most rooms are of a suitable size but some in the KG are too small to allow active learning. Well-maintained buses ensure transport to and from school is safe.

The principal, vice-principal and owner's representative have started to address the issues highlighted in the last inspection report through a school self-evaluation process. This has resulted in a SIP which addresses issues identified for

improvement. However, success criteria are not sufficiently focused upon standardised, objectively measurable benchmarks and universally adopted methods of marking and recording student improvement and progress. As a result, it is not possible to measure the impact of planned actions. Subject leaders have started to monitor teaching but this is focused on teaching tasks as opposed to how effectively students are enabled to learn. This means that the effectiveness of monitoring is limited.

Parents are very supportive of the school. There is a well-understood complaints procedure. Reports are sent home three times a year. The leadership team has successfully motivated the staff and salaries are fair and paid on time. The school budget has not been audited this year. The school is well supported by parents and staff and students learn and play in a safe environment, but weaknesses in the quality of education mean that the school does not provide value for money. Although the school has begun to put steps in place to address these shortcomings, these have not yet proved effective and the capacity to improve not yet demonstrated.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Develop the school's ability to self-evaluate and accurately track students' performance. Use the information obtained from this to:
 - i. produce a SIP with targets that are linked to improving students' outcomes; and
 - ii. provide further professional development for subject leaders to ensure effective monitoring of the quality of teaching through evaluation of learning and progress.
2. Improve the quality of teaching so that teachers:
 - i. plan and deliver a KG curriculum based on activities and learning through play and exploration;
 - ii. plan sequences of work that cater for the needs of all students, especially the most and least able and those with special needs; and
 - iii. improve day-to-day assessment and provide clear guidance and feedback so that students know what they need to do to improve.
3. Review the school's curriculum provision and ensure that:
 - i. the curriculum is enhanced by meaningful activities and opportunities for practical investigational tasks in all subjects;
 - ii. sufficient resources are available to allow teachers to plan for group work and individual study;

- iii. there are opportunities for students to use ICT to support their learning across the curriculum; and
- iv. students have the opportunity to produce longer pieces of written work so that they can use and develop the skills they acquire.