



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



Inspection Report

Al Ekhlass Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

Al Ekhlass Private School

Inspection Date	9 – 12 February 2015
School ID#	53
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	1052
Age Range	3 to 19 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Hamdi Al Sabagh
School Address	Baniyas - East 8, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 585 3591; +971 (0)2 585 3592
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 585 3593
Official Email (ADEC)	alekhlass.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	13 – 16 January 2014

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:

- standards of attainment are in line with age-related national expectations in all key subjects and above them in mathematics
- the caring atmosphere and effective policies successfully promote good behaviour, high aspirations and positive relationships
- students demonstrate respect for UAE values and culture and appreciation of its multi-national society
- the varied teaching strategies employed in some lessons in most subjects interest and motivate students
- some of the senior staff and subject coordinators effectively monitor and evaluate the teaching in their subjects and encourage their colleagues to learn from one another.

The main areas for improvement are:

- curriculum implementation in the KG to ensure it meets the developmental needs of young children, including adequate resourcing and suitable premises
- ensuring the learning objectives in all lessons are clear, precise and challenging enough for all students
- use of data by managers and teachers make to identify strengths and weaknesses in student performance in key subjects; and to make modifications to the curriculum and to teaching
- provision of sufficient good quality classroom resources and facilities for recreation, sport and physical education
- development and implementation of a strategic plan which is widely understood and targeted at helping students succeed.

Introduction

A team of 5 inspectors carried out the inspection over 4 days. Very few students attended on the third day because of the launch of the Qasr Al Hosn festival and the school closed early. Inspectors observed 68 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, teachers, a member of the Advisory Board, parents and groups of students. Inspectors analysed students' examination results and scrutinised samples of their written work. They considered other data provided by the school and a range of documents about policies and procedures. Inspectors surveyed the work of the school as a whole, including its extra-curricular activities. They analysed the 433 responses to a parents' questionnaire. The principal and leadership team were involved throughout the inspection and undertook 4 observations of lessons alongside inspectors.

Description of the School

Founded in 1987, the school moved to its present site in a largely residential area in September 2011. Its vision is to become 'a distinguished educational institution that keeps up with development through effective community participation'. It is licensed to offer the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12.

There are 1052 students: 52% are girls, almost all are Muslim and all speak Arabic as a first language. There are 125 children in KG; 428 in Grades 1 – 4; and 499 in Grades 5 – 12, taught in separate boys' and girls' sections. Most come from Arab countries, mainly Syria (21%), Jordan (18%), Egypt (15%) and Palestine (12%); 6% are Emirati nationals. The school has identified 10 students with special educational needs (SEN), all of whom they described as slow learners. No students are formally identified as gifted and talented. Children are admitted to the KG regardless of ability. Older students are accepted if they perform successfully in entry tests in Arabic, English and mathematics. Students in grades 6-11 take examinations set by the MoE in all subjects, which are marked internally. Students in Grade 12 take examinations set and marked externally by the MoE.

The school is governed by an Advisory Board, whose members are appointed by the owner and include a representative of the parents. The leadership team comprises the principal, appointed in October 2014, the acting vice-principal recently promoted from within the school, 2 academic supervisors and subject coordinators. Staff turnover has been very low in recent years.

Annual fees are in the low range: from AED 8,050 in KG to AED 14,000 for Grade 12, exclusive of transport, books and uniform.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

Al Ekhlass Private School provides education of an unsatisfactory quality overall because the youngest and most vulnerable children in the KG do not make adequate progress. They are accommodated in small classrooms with insufficient resources and are taught by unqualified teachers. The curriculum implementation is unsatisfactory; this is a limiting judgment that means the school cannot be judged to be satisfactory overall.

Higher attaining students in mathematics and English reach levels that match international standards, assisted by some good teaching in these subjects. Students' personal development is satisfactory and improving, and behaviour is good. Students of many different nationalities enjoy cordial relationships with one another and with staff. They demonstrate understanding and strong respect for UAE values. The caring atmosphere, strong supervision and the effective implementation of approved policies protect students from harm.

The facilities and the supply and quality of learning resources are insufficient to support further improvements to the teaching and to promote better student progress in most subjects. The leadership team is developing a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching. The school lacks a coherent plan to set its strategic direction over the next few years.

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment is satisfactory in all the key subjects. Attainment and progress have both improved since the last inspection, when they were judged unsatisfactory in all subjects apart from Arabic and Islamic education. Progress is strongest in mathematics where it is satisfactory and improving. Children in the Kindergarten (KG) continue to make unsatisfactory progress in all aspects of their development because the curriculum and the teaching are unsuited to the needs of young children. Students with SEN make satisfactory progress, those who are gifted and talented make unsatisfactory progress.

Grade 12 external examination results in all subjects in recent years are similar to or better than those of other schools that teach the MoE curriculum. The school makes little practical use of its analysis of the results of these and other internally marked examinations, beyond identifying the weakest performing students who might require additional assistance.

Attainment in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies is broadly in line with the expectations of students following the same curriculum. Most students at Cycle 1 (grades 1 – 5) are able to read words and sentences in Arabic and identify

different sounds. In Cycles 2 (grades 6 – 9) and 3 (grades 10 – 12), they make better progress in reading and speaking in Standard Arabic than in writing. Many students in Cycle 3 lack the ability to write grammatically. Most students develop satisfactory knowledge of the principles of the Islamic faith. They are able to link this knowledge to their own experience with increasing confidence. Students of all nationalities develop secure understanding of the geography, history and economy of the UAE.

Attainment in English and mathematics is in line with the standards expected nationally. Girls at all cycles make better progress than boys in speaking, reading and writing English. By the time they reach Cycle 3, many girls have developed a practical understanding of everyday spoken English and are proficient speakers of the language. Students make satisfactory progress in reading and less than satisfactory progress in writing at some length and for different purposes. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory and improving. High attaining students at Cycle 1 can measure accurately to make geometrical calculations. Those at Cycle 3, solve algebraic equations competently. These students reach levels consistent with international standards.

Attainment in science and information and communications technology (ICT) matches national expectations. Students from Cycle 1 through to Cycle 3 develop secure understanding of scientific concepts. Their ability to conduct and draw conclusions from scientific experiments also develops satisfactorily because lessons include well-planned practical work. Students at all grades can use computers competently to find, select and store information. Students at Cycle 3 can present for specified purposes, using a range of ICT applications.

Most students acquire the basic skills they need to work and learn competently in all subjects. The abilities to work with others in teams, to organise information and make presentations are promoted successfully in some lessons in most subjects. The 21st century skills required to become successful independent learners, who think logically and creatively to solve problems, are less well developed.

Students' personal development

All aspects of the students' personal development are satisfactory or better. The behaviour of the girls and many of the boys is good. Students of the many different nationalities work and play well together. Relationships between students and teachers are almost always friendly and relaxed. In assemblies, through their participation in national celebrations and in lessons, students demonstrate strong respect for UAE values and culture and a good appreciation of the multi-national, plural society in which they live.

Almost all students show they value learning and the education they receive. This is reflected by the above average attendance rate of 93%. Most students are adequately developing the personal qualities and interpersonal skills they will need in the next stages of their education and employment. Boys and girls express high aspirations for the future.

Students join in the satisfactory range of social, cultural, sporting and other activities. Some are able to exercise leadership in assemblies and at celebrations. The school council offers its members little opportunity for students to take the initiative and to contribute to decisions about how the school works. Many students are fully capable of doing so.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from good to unsatisfactory and is satisfactory overall. It was satisfactory or better in 80% of the lessons observed. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, when they were satisfactory or better in only a minority of lessons. The teaching remains inadequate in the KG, almost all teaching observed was unsatisfactory; it is not effective in promoting young children's cognitive, social and physical development.

Almost all teachers possess good knowledge of the subjects they teach, which enables them to make competent presentations and provide accurate answers to students' questions. The intelligent selection of a variety of teaching methods in some lessons interests and motivates students. These methods encourage better progress and are beginning to lead to higher attainment. In these lessons teaching strategies, including the use of ICT, encourage students to learn from one another and to think logically when solving problems. They include practical investigative work in mathematics and science and carefully planned sequences of activities to develop speaking, reading and writing in English. Learning in one subject sometimes supports work in another, for example when students learn in ICT lessons how to operate a program they will be using in mathematics.

In many lessons learning objectives remain unclear and imprecise. Teachers are consequently unable to check students' progress accurately. Many lessons lack challenge; work for most students in these lessons is too easy and they are unable to make much progress. In the less effective lessons questions are often directed to a few students only. Too much talk by teachers limits the opportunities for students to engage actively with what they are learning.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The curriculum delivered in the KG is very unsatisfactory. Many of the activities, such as colouring pictures and worksheets are dull and repetitive and have little impact on the children's development. The children have very few opportunities to choose which activity to do, to investigate or to learn alongside one another through structured play. The needs of those with SEN or who are gifted and talented are not well enough identified or planned for; as a result they do not make the progress they are capable of. The delivery of the curriculum across the school does not provide enough opportunities for students to develop independent learning skills.

The curriculum planning is successful in motivating and promoting the academic progress of students. Students' understanding of UAE family and community values and culture is promoted particularly well. Many students benefit from taking part in a fair number and variety of additional activities, such as visits to local places of interest, competitions and special projects. The school makes reasonable use of the surrounding community as a resource for learning. Links are established with the Red Crescent, the police and local businesses.

The curriculum for younger students is broadened by lessons in art and music. Little specific attention is paid at Cycle 3 to students' eventual career choices. Topics studied in subjects including English and science contribute to students' understanding of the world of work and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school makes satisfactory and better provision for the protection, care, guidance and support of its students. Concern for the welfare of students is evident in their generally positive relationships with the staff. A caring atmosphere prevails and there is constant adult supervision of students throughout the day. The school implements effective, well-understood policies to protect students from harm. The policy for managing students' behaviour and combating any bullying is respected and implemented consistently. Medical facilities are satisfactory and there are prayer rooms for boys and girls.

The social workers, section supervisors and teachers provides good support for the students' personal development. The students are well-known to the staff. Support for students' academic progress is less successful. Information about individuals' academic performance is rarely used to set targets for improvement.

The school has only recently begun to make specific provision for students with SEN through the work of a specialist teacher. The identification of students'

special needs and the quality of the provision made for them in lessons in most subjects remains unsatisfactory.

Older students benefit from visitors from universities and businesses and from visiting higher education institutions. The guidance given to individual students when they make choices about the courses they will study and their post-school destinations is less than satisfactory.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and premises provide an inadequate environment for students' learning. The state of maintenance and repair of many of the buildings and facilities is unsatisfactory and of a lower standard than at the time of the last inspection. The accommodation for learning in science is inadequate, particularly for older students. There are insufficient outdoor and indoor facilities for recreation, sport and physical education, for which, apart from the grass football pitch, there are only hard paved surfaces. The accommodation in the KG is inadequate for the number of children who attend. The classrooms used for music and supporting students with SEN are too small for their purposes. The absence of a lift to the first floor would present a difficulty for physically disabled students.

Security arrangements to supervise the school site, check all visitors and deter intruders are good. The school adopts adequate procedures to ensure there are no serious hazards to the health and safety of students and that electrical equipment is tested regularly and kept in safe working condition. Potentially dangerous substances and equipment are stored and used safely.

The school's resources to support its aims

The quality of the school's resources is unsatisfactory. The teachers are sufficient in number and, apart from those who teach in the KG, qualified for the subjects and age-ranges they teach. Some teachers have attended externally provided training sessions on aspects of modern pedagogy and shared what they have learned with their colleagues through in-school training. The impact of these is beginning to be felt in classrooms.

The quality of learning resources in classrooms remains inadequate to fully support modern teaching methods and to promote the development of 21st century skills. For example, there are very few authentic English resources from which students can learn; science materials and equipment are of basic quality only; and the use of manipulatives in mathematics lessons is only just beginning. Resources in the KG are unsuited to the learning needs of young children and poor use is made of learning assistants. One of the computer laboratories has too few machines for the number of students who need to use them in lessons.

The staff in many cases make the best use they can of the unsatisfactory facilities. For example, the library is too small and its stock too limited for a school of this size. It is well-maintained and there is plenty of students' work on display. There is a lap top computer for student use, with an internet connection. The librarian is active in encouraging students to read and to take part in competitions and cultural activities. The teachers of ICT maintain a stimulating environment for learning within the limits imposed by the condition of the computer laboratories and the facilities they contain. Data projectors are installed in almost all classrooms; teachers and students are beginning to make good use of them.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new Principal has inherited an enthusiastic and able senior team, comprising the vice-principal, academic supervisors and subject coordinators. Their loyalty to the school and their commitment to improving it inspire and motivate many of the rest of the staff.

Parents generally support the work of the school. They respond positively to messages they receive about, for example, lateness and unexplained absence. About a third of those who completed the parents' questionnaire felt that the school did not provide sufficient information about their son or daughter's progress. The parents' and students' councils play only minor roles in representing the interests of these groups, and so parents and students play little active part in decision-making. The Advisory Board is independent of the school's professional leadership. It supports the work of the school through effective legal and financial supervision on behalf of the owner.

A determined effort has been made over the last year to address the recommendations of last inspection report. Some appreciable improvements have resulted in the quality of the teaching and learning and in the protection, care and support the school provides for its students. These have resulted in better academic performance in the key subjects and stronger personal development, particularly in students' respect for the values of the UAE and its multi-national character.

An effective professional development programme for teachers on aspects of modern pedagogy is beginning to have an impact in some lessons in most subjects. Teachers learn from one another in some subjects, such as English and mathematics, through peer lesson observation and lesson study. The dissemination of the programme is driven by middle leaders, some of whom effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching in their subjects and give developmental feedback to teachers. These are promising developments and

contribute to the leadership's knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the education the school provides.

School leaders at all levels are far less well-informed about students' levels of attainment and the progress they make in key subjects as they advance through the cycles. Little effective use is made of the data available about the performance of students in examinations. These data are not interpreted and refined into clear messages that teachers can use to shape and direct their teaching.

The school currently lacks a clearly defined strategic plan, generated and articulated at the most senior level, to drive improvement over the next few years. There is no widely shared understanding among teachers, parents and students of the school's key priorities and what it is doing to achieve them. Those identified in the school's self-evaluation document (SEF) and its school development plan (SDP) are expressed in very general terms. There is little sense in either document of a coherent and coordinated overall strategy to achieve a set of realistic educational goals and ambitions for the students.

The school is in a strong position to make further progress. Individual members of the leadership team have the capacity to secure lasting improvement. A greater sense of common purpose is required to achieve it.

Progress since the last inspection

There has been some improvement since the last inspection. Students' attainment and progress are better in all key subjects and the quality of the teaching has improved, thanks to the impact of a training programme. Improvements in monitoring and evaluating teaching quality have led to better self-evaluation. Education provision in the KG remains unsatisfactory and is the key reason why the school cannot be deemed to be operating at a satisfactory level by comparison with international standards. More remains to be done to improve the use of assessment information and to make lessons match students' individual needs and abilities more closely.

Most of the conditions for further improvement are in place. More emphasis is needed on sharpening learning objectives and making them more challenging for most students. Better facilities and better quality learning resources are needed to support further improvements in teaching and the academic progress that students can make.

Capacity exists among the school's leadership to secure these improvements. A coherent strategic plan for the next few years is required to maintain the current upward trajectory.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the delivery of the curriculum by:
 - i. implementing a KG curriculum that encourages children to learn more actively through exploration and play
 - ii. providing students more opportunities to develop independent learning skills
 - iii. making better provision for those students with SENs
 - iv. improving outdoor and indoor facilities for recreation, sport and physical education
 - v. securing more learning resources of good quality for use in classrooms and specialist areas, including the science laboratories.
2. Improve the quality of the education provided in the KG by:
 - i. ensuring that the teachers understand how young children learn and employ a range of strategies that will promote their cognitive, social and physical development
 - ii. securing a range of learning resources that young children will find stimulating and will help them to learn
 - iii. preventing overcrowding by enlarging the premises or reducing the number of children who attend.
3. Increase the level of challenge for most students in lessons by:
 - i. making learning objectives more clear and precise
 - ii. using learning objectives to check students' progress and set more challenging targets.
4. Explain and interpret the available data on student performance so that subject coordinators and teachers can more accurately identify strengths and weaknesses and modify the curriculum and their teaching in response.
5. Devise and articulate a coherent strategic plan for the next few years, setting out the school's ambitions for its students, the strategies it will adopt to achieve them and how it will measure their success.

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								