



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



Inspection Report

Al Ettehad Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Ettehad Private School

Inspection Date	19 – 22 January 2014
School ID#	142
Licensed Curriculum	Pakistani
Number of Students	609
Age Range	3 to 17 years (KG – Grade 8)
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Khaja Waheeduddin
School Address	Area 16, Plot 14, Falaj Hazaa, Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 780 5025
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Official Email (ADEC)	alettehad.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	12 – 15 February 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 7
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The main strengths of the school are:

- students enjoy being at school and willingly undertake the work provided by teachers
- the school has a calm atmosphere and the working day runs smoothly

The main areas for improvement are:

- the urgent need to attend to a range of health and safety concerns - in particular, more secure recruitment checks, fire regulations and safety on buses
 - self-evaluation is too positive and leaders do not monitor the school's performance rigorously enough
 - the standard of students' work is well below international standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and well below ADEC's expectations in Arabic, Islamic and social studies.
 - the quality of learning resources and more effective use of the existing facilities
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 71 lessons and other activities, reviewed students' written work and studied school documents. They also talked with the Principal, parents, other members of staff and students. The 52 responses to the parents' questionnaire were also considered.

Description of the School

This school was originally founded as a villa school in Al Ain and moved to its present, purpose-built site in September 2010. The surrounding area is not residential and is used almost exclusively for schools. The school's aims are to use 'the expertise of our academic and non-academic staff to achieve excellent outcomes for our students, imbuing them with the spirit of good citizenship'.

All 609 students enrolled are Muslim and the majority speak Urdu as a first language. There are 74 children in KG, 386 in Grades 1 – 5, 149 in Grades 6 – 8; of these, 73% are boys. The majority of students come from Pakistan, 70%, and the rest from Afghanistan, 28%, and 2% are Bangladeshi; none are Emirati and none come from the Gulf States. Annual fees range from AED 1,920 in KG to AED 2,700 for Grade 8, exclusive of transport, books and uniform.

All children are admitted to Kindergarten (KG); older students must pass the school's admission test. The school delivers the Pakistani curriculum. No students are identified as having special educational needs (SEN) or specific gifts or talents.

The school is administered through a Board of Trustees that includes the two owners, the Principal and Vice Principal. The Principal has been in post since March 2013. The school's last full inspection took place during February 2012. The school subsequently received two monitoring visits, during May 2012 and March 2013.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

The standard of students' work is well below international standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Students do not meet ADEC's expectations in Arabic, social studies and Islamic education. Standards and progress in other subjects, including Urdu and physical education, are also well below average. Students make very slow progress in all subjects.

Children enter KG1 with skills that are in line with international expectations. By the end of KG2, standards are well below in Arabic, English, mathematics and science. Inspection evidence indicates that progress in English and mathematics improves in the higher grades. This is because the standard of teaching is higher and students are more actively engaged in their learning. The standard of students' work is below that usually found in other schools that teach the same curriculum.

Students' basic skills are below international expectations, especially with regard to their ability to think independently and solve problems. KG children learn the names of the letters in the English and Arabic alphabet in isolation. They do not learn the accompanying sounds and this slows the development of the basic skills needed to read and write. Older students, especially boys, find it difficult to understand English as by those from outside their local linguistic community. Most of the students find it difficult to speak or write creatively in English and Arabic. This is because they lack self-confidence and find it difficult to apply their theoretical knowledge of grammar to everyday situations.

Students' personal development

The overwhelming majority of students are sensible and polite to each other and adults. Relationships between students and their teachers are usually good and boys and girls agree that there is no bullying. During lessons, students readily translate for those new to the school if they have problems understanding their teachers. Most of the students are eager to learn. At times, a few students become restless and make silly noises. Such inappropriate responses are often as much a reflection of boredom caused by shortcomings in teaching and the curriculum.

While students willingly undertake the work provided, few are curious or innovative thinkers. Many lack self-confidence and are passive during lessons. The responses of younger students in the classroom are often restricted to the rote repetition of their teacher's last few words. Students of all ages are reluctant to

seek clarification if they do not understand and ask very few questions of their own. Students' knowledge of the wider world is very limited.

The school fulfills its obligations regarding raising the UAE flag and playing the UAE national anthem during assembly. Students' understanding of the country's intrinsic customs and heritage is satisfactory. Nominated students serve as school councillors, prefects or as head of one of the four Houses. Their roles are restricted to monitoring behaviour between lessons and students have no influence on the day-to-day running of the school.

Attendance to school remains too low at 80%. Punctuality at the start of the day is poor; around half of the school is absent at the start of morning assembly.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teachers' subject knowledge is often very unsatisfactory. This is because almost 1 in 4 teachers is not a qualified graduate and holds only a Pakistani school-leaving certificate. Teachers have low expectations of students' capabilities. Teachers receive no professional training and turnover is high. In addition, around 1 in 6 teachers is absent each day and colleagues cover their lessons, often without any information regarding the work that should be provided.

The traditional teaching style largely focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, rather than understanding. For example, during a mathematics lesson in KG, the activity focused on children being able to write a number neatly, rather than developing an understanding of its mathematical significance. Teachers do their best with very limited learning resources. They do not adequately develop students' analytical and personal skills. There is limited collaboration or discussion and their verbal contributions are often limited to only a few words.

Lesson planning and continuous assessment are poor. Teachers now use a standard planning format, but they continue to provide only one task for the whole class. Students do not undertake any external, standardized examinations and the school does not compare the standard of students' work with other schools. Marking is of variable quality. Teachers do not use the results of in-house tests or exams to help students improve their work or prepare activities that meet their various needs. Many teachers cannot assess individual students' understanding or progress as they only pose questions to the whole class. Teachers do not identify students with SEN or particular gifts and talents and take no account of any such needs when they plan and deliver their lessons.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum offered remains too narrow and does not include art or drama; music has been introduced to Grade 1 only. The curriculum offers few activities that excite or energise students. There are few opportunities for students to speak spontaneously and use English or Arabic in everyday situations because the curriculum focuses on learning the rules of formal grammar.

The school engaged external consultants to help teachers write schemes of work for all subjects. This contract lapsed and teachers did not continue without the consultants' support. As a result, the schemes of work remain partially written and cover only half the academic year. There is no clear curriculum being followed in KG.

There are few opportunities for students to develop either their ICT or science investigative skills. The absence of an ICT teacher has resulted in the cancellation of some lessons and some students have not undertaken any ICT work since the start of term. There are no opportunities for students to undertake extracurricular activities and no inter- school sport.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

Students say they feel safe in school. They also readily confirm that there is no bullying or corporal punishment. First aid facilities are in place and the clinic is clean and well equipped.

There is no system for supporting newly enrolled students, many of whom are new to the UAE and have little knowledge of English. The school has a child protection policy. Staff have not been trained on this and procedures are not clear for adults about whom they should contact if they suspect a problem. Prior to appointment and deployment, the school does not undertake checks regarding employees' moral character. In addition, over half the teachers have not received approval from ADEC despite working in the school for up to two years. Other welfare and health and safety concerns include: a lack of documentation regarding the maintenance of school-owned buses and the routine safety testing of electrical equipment; the lack of a female supervisor on some of the buses; the lack of belts on some of the seats used on the school buses; inadequately cleaned toilets; the lack of necessary toiletries for hygiene and a locked fire door near the KG classes. There is no social worker because the person responsible has been re-deployed as a full time class teacher. In addition, there is a widespread tendency for adults, at all levels, to make audible, disparaging personal comments about students and their parents.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The building is adequately maintained and the standard of decoration is satisfactory. Security of the site is good. Most of the classrooms are tidy and appropriate in size for the number of students on roll. Students remain within their classroom base during most of the school day and the learning environment within most of the rooms is bleak. There are limited displays of students' work and many of the commercial posters displayed are old and tired. Even in winter, curtains are often closed and this reduces the natural daylight. There is no art room and the library is small. There is still no outdoor area for KG children to enable them to learn through planned play and exploration.

Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements to the accommodation. The science laboratory has been renovated and classes from KG to Grade 5 also now have an indoor activity room. The installation of closed circuit television has improved security and large canopies provide shade during assembly and break time. The outdoor sports pitch has been cleared of larger stones; it remains unsafe for sports such as football. No pitches are marked out and this reduces the extent to which students can develop their physical skills and knowledge. In addition, the perimeter fencing includes barbed wire and this represents a serious risk. Within sight of the observing class teacher, barefoot boys occasionally scale the high fence to retrieve the ball when it lands beyond the perimeter.

There is limited freedom of movement within many classrooms and they are suitable in size for only a sedentary class. Toilet facilities within KG are unsuitable. The sanitary ware used by KG children is too high for small children. There is no lift to the first floor and this would present problems should a student with physical difficulties enrol.

The school's resources to support its aims

The quality of the school's resources is very unsatisfactory. There are currently two teacher vacancies; one each for ICT and Arabic. In their absence, there is no consistent cover teacher and this is reflected in the very unsatisfactory standard of students' work.

Classroom resources are very limited and some teachers personally provide additional activities in order to add variety. There is only one data show projector and this is installed in the science laboratory. Other subject teachers share this resource and this compromises the extent to which the laboratory can be used for practical investigations. Few of the computers within the ICT suite are in working order and up to 8 students share a single machine. This limits the development of the ICT skills necessary for the contemporary workplace.

The school has recently purchased a wide range of textbooks for each subject area. The range of reading books in Urdu, English and Arabic is poor. Students cannot borrow books from the library. The quality, quantity and range of science resources for science are very unsatisfactory. The canteen is clean and hygienic.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day level and staff and student morale are satisfactory. The owners have no day-to-day involvement with the school; they meet with the Principal and Vice Principal each month to review expenditure. There is no performance management system to review the work of the Principal and Vice Principal. Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear and there is a single job description for the Principal, senior leaders and heads of department. On a day-to-day level, the Vice Principal supports the Principal well. The Principal would like to see the school improve but communicates no sense of urgency. There is no clear, shared vision for the future and little sense of on-going improvement. Senior leaders have started to monitor the quality of teaching. Their observations do not focus on learning or identify areas for improvement; virtually every teacher meets all the specified criteria. Teachers do not have individual or departmental development plans.

The school development plan is a useful document. Written with the support of external consultants, it systematically addresses all of the development areas from the last inspection. In the absence of these consultants, the leadership is no longer using the plan to guide progress towards the intended improvements. Self-evaluation continues to be too positive. The school judges itself to be at least satisfactory in all areas and, occasionally, very good. In addition, leaders are not systematically monitoring the educational impact of investments made and actions taken.

There are no links with any other schools. Parents receive 4 written reports each year about their children's progress. Teachers state that very few parents attend consultation meetings. Outcomes from the parental questionnaires and parents interviews during this inspection, indicate that the majority are satisfied with the quality of education provided.

Since the last report, there have been some improvements to the school's provision. These involve the buildings and some elements of learning resources. There has been minimal impact on the quality of education provided and the standard of students' work. The school is therefore not able to demonstrate that it has sufficient capacity to improve without significant ongoing external support.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has responded to the last inspection report in a number of ways:

- there is now a prayer room for girls
- large canopies have been installed in the boys' and girls' outdoor recreation areas
- sports equipment has been purchased
- an activity room has been constructed for KG to Grade 5
- the science laboratory has been renovated
- music has been introduced for KG and Grade 1
- the Vice Principal has been appointed

Child Protection procedures are still not clearly understood by all members of staff. A significant proportion of teaching staff remain unqualified and over half have not received ADEC approval. Professional development has not been effective in helping teachers to provide work that meets students' needs. Assessment data is wholly based on test and examination results and there is no effective system for tracking students' progress. Senior managers have started to monitor teaching. There has been inadequate impact upon the quality of learning.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. As a matter of the greatest urgency attend to the large number of serious health and safety concerns documented on the final page of this report.
2. Raise the standard of students' work in all subjects by:
 - i. employing qualified teachers and reducing teacher turnover
 - ii. re-instating the programme of professional development to include the systematic planning of lessons that will challenge students of all abilities and the constructive use of assessment to monitor progress
 - iii. broadening, adapting and enriching the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of all students, particularly in KG
 - iv. developing students' collaborative, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

3. As a matter of urgency, strengthen leadership and management by:
 - i. ensuring self-evaluation of the school's performance is realistic and clearly linked to ADEC school inspection criteria; use this information to drive priorities for improvement
 - ii. devising and implementing robust procedures to systematically review, evaluate and monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
 4. Improve the quality, quantity and appeal of learning resources and make more effective use of the facilities available.
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Inspection Grades

	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
Performance Standard	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								