



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



Summary Inspection Report

Al Manara Private School

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Iqraa

Al Manara Private School

Inspection Date	18 th – 21 st February, 2013
School ID#	004
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	1,442
Age Range	KG – Grade 12
Gender	Mixed KG – Grade 4, separate Grade 5 – Grade 12
Principal	Ahmed Zakaraia Haroon
School Address	Behind the petrol station, West Baniyas, Abu Dhabi
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Introduction

The school was inspected by a team of five inspectors who: observed 82 lessons and other student activities, scrutinised students' written work, analysed student and school performance data, studied school documents, and talked with staff, students and parents.

Description of the School

The school was established in 1984, initially as a villa school in Abu Dhabi. It relocated to its current temporary school site in West Baniyas during August 2012, ready for the current academic year. New purpose-built premises are under construction in Musaffah and the school intends to move to these permanent premises for the academic year 2014/15.

There are 107 children in KG and 1335 in Grade 1 to Grade 12, comprising 894 boys and 548 girls. In Grades one to six, there are 304 boys and 214 girls. All students are Muslim and of these, 2.5% of the boys and 0.9% of the girls are local Emirati. Around 4% come from Gulf States and the rest come from 16 other Arab countries, principally Egypt (24%), Syria (23%), Jordan (22%) and Palestine (9%). The aims of the school include the intention to provide an exceptional standard of education and to create an aware and educated generation of leaders. The school delivers the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum.

Teachers assess students prior to enrolment and no student is refused on the grounds of ability. All teachers have appropriate teaching qualifications. Fees are low and vary slightly depending on whether or not the student was enrolled prior to the schools' relocation. Fees range from AED 11,560 for KG to AED 15,878 or AED 17,750 for Grade 12 (including books, transport and uniform). Students are from average socio-economic backgrounds and the school has reduced fees for those in need.

Staff salaries are average; the average class teacher's salary ranges from AED 4,000 to AED 8,000 dependant on experience and qualifications. No students are identified as having special educational needs and or physical difficulties. The school is privately owned. There is no formal governing body or Board.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 7

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

This is a new school and there is therefore no relevant information regarding the prior standard of students' work. The standard of work seen during the visit was below average in Arabic, Islamic Studies and Social Studies. Standards seen were

well below average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Students make very slow progress in all subjects, apart from Social Studies where progress is below average. Progress is relatively better in this subject because students naturally absorb knowledge about the traditional way of life and customs within the United Arab Emirates through their everyday lives.

While students make satisfactory progress in acquiring the basic skills required for learning, such as reading, writing and numeracy, overall progress made is very slow. This is because teachers do not adapt the work to meet students' individual needs. Teachers rely too much on textbooks and provide standard worksheets for all students, regardless of their individual ability. As a result, the progress made by students with special educational needs and those with particular gifts and talents is even slower than their peers. They make poor progress in all areas of the curriculum. The traditional style of teaching does not promote active, practical learning. Students know the facts but cannot apply them to everyday life. For example, they know the moon rotates around the Earth but cannot relate this to the influence of gravity during high and low tides. Students' acquisition of the independent learning skills they will need for their future lives and the work place is poor.

The school has no effective system for tracking students' progress. This restricts the progress during lessons and over time. Boys and girls make the same very slow progress, as do students of all nationalities. The available assessment information shows that the standard of Emirati students' work and progress is even slower than others in mathematics and science.

The majority of students behave sensibly during the school day. They are respectful towards each other and teachers and welcoming towards visitors. Around the school, they usually behave politely and with consideration for each other. While a few students act as behaviour supervisors during break times there are very few opportunities for students to assume personal responsibility. Most of them are interested in learning and willingly apply themselves to the tasks teachers provide during lessons. The traditional style of teaching does not encourage students to use their initiative and very few raise questions of their own. Teachers provide few opportunities for students to work in groups and they undertake very little independent research. Skills required for their future lives including the work place, such as the ability to investigate and be a creative and innovative thinker, are poorly developed. There are no written records of attendance so the school is unable to provide evidence to substantiate its assertion that it is 95%. Students say that the school contacts their parents promptly by phone or text if they are unexpectedly absent.

Students made very unsatisfactory progress in almost all of the lessons observed. Too many teachers continue to slavishly follow the standard textbook. They use almost no additional resources, visual aids or technology to enliven lessons and enhance students' understanding. Teachers usually manage students' behaviour well and, in the better lessons, clarify the purpose of the activities provided. On these occasions, this helps students to be able to judge the extent to which they are meeting the intended objectives. Although students obediently undertake class work, teachers do not encourage them to speak at length and their verbal contribution is often limited to brief answers. Teachers also provide very few opportunities for critical thinking and collaboration with others. They take insufficient account of assessment information to consider students' individual needs. As a result, less able students often struggle with the task, while the more able finish quickly and are not challenged to think deeply. For example in mathematics, progress is very unsatisfactory because lessons are repetitive and teachers indicate the answer they want when asking the questions.

Teachers provide no individual or group targets for improvement and very few creative opportunities. During a G5 art lesson students were required to copy the teacher's stylised drawing as closely as possible. If students do work together it is usually because they are too few learning resources and they are required to share. Students do not undertake self or peer assessment. This limits their understanding of whether or not they are undertaking the task correctly and what they need to do in order to improve. No students are currently identified as having special educational needs or as being academically able. Teachers do identify a small number of students as being able in some areas, their particular talents reflect activities undertaken outside of school. The school helps them to participate in community competitions, such as swimming or public speaking. Within Arabic, teachers often speak with a strong local dialect or accent and students are therefore not sufficiently exposed to good models of standard Arabic which inhibits the development of their speaking skills.

The KG curriculum is too formal and does not provide any opportunities for children to choose their own activity or learn through play. Their school day is structured from start to finish and revolves entirely around activities the class teacher has planned. Although the available resources are reasonably appealing, they are extremely limited in quality and quantity. Very few activities foster children's creative talents. For example, the teacher showed them exactly how she wanted them to make a model of a bird's nest and then did it for them. Children in KG make very unsatisfactory progress in all areas, including their physical and emotional development.

Overall, the curriculum fails to meet basic requirements because there are no opportunities for students of any age to study music. The school does successfully build upon the traditional MoE curriculum by providing psychology and sociology for G12 arts stream students. Lessons are not adapted to the school's circumstances, or those of individual students. Students commented on how rarely they use information and communication technology. There are no computers in classrooms and there are too few working computers in the ICT suite for all students to enjoy ready access during their weekly lesson. Access to extra-curricular activities is very limited, although there is a boys' football team.

All the required checks for the safe recruitment of staff are made and there are suitable arrangements for first aid and the dispensing of medicines. Several students told inspectors that teachers hurt them, and subjected them to verbal abuse. There is no clear guidance on what students or staff can do in the event of such abuse. There is no child protection policy; procedures for protecting students from threats or violence are poor. During the inspection, inspectors did not see any corporal punishment take place, but heard several staff members behaving in an intimidating and verbally aggressive manner towards students.

Students' well-being is further jeopardised because cleaning materials within KG and chemicals in the boys' science laboratory are not stored safely. At the end of the school day, procedures for boarding school buses are highly dangerous. Many students are not supervised and they run around the quadrangle while buses arrive and reverse into place.

Teachers provide weak guidance to students when they are making personal choices about what they could do when they leave school. While G12 students have visited one local university, they do not receive any visits from alternatives or from local professionals or employers. They are therefore inadequately prepared for life after they leave school.

The building is a purpose built school. Security is good and the premises are sufficiently spacious for the number of students enrolled. Most of the classrooms are of a suitable size and the fabric of the building is satisfactory. Some of the specialist accommodation is limited. For example, it is six months since the school opened and the school has not yet established any libraries. Students say that this is affecting their studies, as there are no facilities for private study. There are too few science laboratories and there is no music room. There is no suitable surface for physical games such as football. There are only hard paved areas and these have the potential to cause serious injury. There are no records of the safety testing of electrical equipment. Within KG, there is no outdoor fenced play area

and no multi-purpose closed hall. There are sufficient toilets for the number of children but they are not accessible from within the classroom and are adult-sized.

The learning environment is not stimulating. Apart from standard textbooks, learning resources are very limited in range, quality and appeal. While teachers are appropriately qualified and sufficient in number, they have no access to any professional development. The lack of resources for children in KG restricts the range of activities they can undertake. There is a widespread lack of basic equipment throughout the school, such as informative posters, science resources and computers. The almost complete lack of technology in classrooms restricts learning and prevents students being able to develop high level ICT skills and skills for their later working life.

The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Staff morale is satisfactory and, despite the school's relocation, teacher turnover has been average. While the principal states that the owner is supportive, he never visits the school and receives all his information from the principal and therefore has no objective viewpoint. There is no governing body and no system whereby the owner can formally review the principal's effectiveness.

The school does not monitor outcomes such as the quality of teaching, care, curriculum, standard of students' work or progress made. As a result, the principal and subject co-ordinators cannot start to identify what the school does, or does not do, well. They cannot meaningfully identify priorities for improvement and narrow the gap, for example, between the progress made by the majority of students and those with special educational needs or particular gifts and talents. The school's improvement plan is poor. It is limited to the statement of good intentions and does not specify any areas for improvement or targets. As a result, the school's overall effectiveness is very unsatisfactory as is its capacity for sustained improvement. The school provides very unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Ensure that leadership has the capacity to accurately evaluate the school's effectiveness to identify and address its relative strengths and weaknesses
2. As a matter of urgency, raise the standard of students' work in all subjects and the development of their 21st Century skills so that they are well prepared for lifelong learning and able to take their position within the work place
3. Introduce a child protection policy and ensure that clear procedures are in place to safeguard students' safety and well-being and ensure there is no corporal punishment.

4. Ensure that teachers have access to suitable training in order that they are well placed to improve students' progress and the quality of education
5. Ensure that teachers use assessment information to adapt the curriculum and work provided meets the needs of students with special educational needs and specific gifts and talents.