



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



Inspection Report

Al Manara Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Manara Private School

Inspection Date	28 - 31 October 2013
School ID#	04
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	1534
Age Range	3 to 17 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Ahmed Zakaria Haroon
School Address	Behind the Petrol Station, West Baniyas, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 585 8760, +971 (0)2 585 8765
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 585 8469
Official Email (ADEC)	almanara.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.almanarps.net
Date of last inspection	18 - 21 February 2013

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
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the positive relationships throughout the school and students' knowledge of, and respect for, the values and heritage of the UAE
- the focus on making improvements in almost all of the Performance Standards since the last inspection
- teachers' subject knowledge and the pockets of good practice in teaching and learning observed in a few lessons especially in the older grades
- the progress made by older students in maths.

The main areas for improvement are:

- accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance
- the need for more clarity about what constitutes effective learning and teaching
- the use of assessment to enable progress for all abilities
- a curriculum review to promote development of 21st Century skills
- a systematic review of all health and safety and Child Protection procedures
- the lack of resources to enhance students' learning, and the need for more facilities for physical education (PE) in order to promote healthy lifestyles.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors who observed 106 lessons. They met with school leaders, teachers, students and parents. They observed school assemblies, student arrivals, break time and school dispersals. They analysed records and documents provided by the school and the data from 277 parents' questionnaires.

Description of the School

Al Manara 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. 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 121 children in the Kindergarten (KG) and 1413 in Grades 1 to 12. In total, there are 927 boys and 607 girls. Almost all students are Muslim. All students are of Arabic heritage with about 5% from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The remainder comes from Egypt (26%), Syria (25%), Jordan (21%) and Palestine (7%) with a few from Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon and Libya. The school vision is for 'All students to succeed at each level and graduate from high school well-prepared for a variety of post secondary pursuits in our society'. The curriculum is the Ministry of Education, and the language of instruction is Arabic. A few grades are also taught some mathematics and science lessons in English.

Students are from average socio-economic backgrounds and the school has reduced fees for those in need. They must pass entrance tests in order to gain admission. Fees are low, and vary slightly depending on whether or not the student was enrolled prior to the schools' relocation. Fees for students new to the school range from AED 11,560 in KG to AED 17,750 in Grade 12. These include registration, tuition, books, bus and uniform fees.

About 25% of the teachers are new to the school this year. All are suitably qualified, some are awaiting ADEC clearance. One student is identified as having additional learning needs. There is a Board of Trustees. The school receives regular support from a School Development Partner (SDP).

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory in most subjects. In their first language of Arabic, attainment and progress are satisfactory. Their skills in speaking, listening and reading are in line with expectations for their age. They can understand age-related texts and they have an adequate vocabulary. The majority can speak confidently and with expression when taking part in role-play. Skills in speaking standard Arabic lack fluency for a minority of students and only a few can write a good extended composition. A few students identified as being gifted and talented can recite poems in Arabic with expression, gesture and conviction.

Attainment and progress in Islamic Studies are unsatisfactory. Only a few students demonstrate acceptable levels of understanding of Islamic concepts. Most have an inaccurate understanding. Most students do not accurately follow the rules of 'Tajweed' (enunciation) when reading the Holy Qu'ran. Recitation by heart of the 'Al Tashahud' section of obligatory prayer is unsatisfactory. In Social Studies attainment and progress are satisfactory. Students have a satisfactory knowledge of history and geography related to the environment they live in and are familiar with. Consequently, most students are able to discuss, analyse and look for solutions using their first language.

Attainment and progress in English is unsatisfactory for most students and below expectations for students learning an additional language. Listening skills are better developed than speaking skills. Students' ability to discuss ideas and solve problems is underdeveloped. Reading and comprehension are weak in most grades. By Grade 12, most students have a good knowledge of grammar and are able to understand more complex pieces. Writing is usually limited to filling in missing words and students rarely compose extended or creative pieces.

In mathematics attainment and progress is unsatisfactory and below international standards in most grades. In KG, children count by rote but have limited understanding of the concept of number, shape, space and measures. Most students throughout the school have a good knowledge of number bonds and can calculate mentally reasonably well. They also have a good grasp of multiplication facts and can apply this when solving equations. Most students lack understanding of how abstract concepts apply to the real world and very few are able to investigate number and solve complex problems. Older students, especially girls, make good progress in calculus.

Attainment and progress in science are unsatisfactory. In KG, children's knowledge and understanding of science is limited to naming animals. Their use of their senses to explore the world is underdeveloped. Students' scientific knowledge, especially in the higher grades, is close to international standards and by the end of Grade 12 it is broadly in line with international standards. Their practical, enquiry based, and investigative skills are weak. Students' ability to carry out experiments, predict, observe and reach conclusions

is well below best international practice.

Attainment and progress in non-core subjects is unsatisfactory. Skills in ICT are underdeveloped and below age-related expectations. By the end of Grade 12 students have the capability to use technology confidently but rarely use it to support their learning in other subjects. In Physical Education (PE), skills in football are reasonably well developed but most students lack understanding of spatial awareness and teamwork. Standards in other sports are well-below international standards for all but the few who practice in clubs outside of school. A significant minority are not fit because they do not practise sports. Artwork is limited to 2-d forms using pencil, crayon and paint and is well-below international standards. Students' ability to collaborate and work independently is inconsistent. Thinking skills in most cases are limited to recall with very few students able to be creative or demonstrate higher-order thinking. Students with additional learning needs make very unsatisfactory progress from their starting points.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Relationships between teachers and students and amongst students are mainly positive and respectful and contribute to a harmonious climate for learning. Students celebrate and applaud achievements of their peers. Most students understand the difference between right and wrong. They respect the values and traditions of the UAE and are happy to live here. Students are allocated roles and responsibilities such as caring for younger students and looking after the environment. They rarely show initiative and most students drop litter at break times. A few students are successful in a variety of activities and competitions outside of school. The skills and qualities needed for the next stage of education and employment such as independence, persistence, adaptability and flexibility, are underdeveloped. A significant number of students do not understand how to live healthy lives and too many choose not to. Attendance is good.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Most teachers, especially in the higher grades, have strong subject knowledge. Professional development to improve teachers' effectiveness has recently begun. A few teachers understand how students learn. They build positive relationships and create a supportive learning environment. In these lessons students have opportunities to work independently and collaboratively. They can solve problems and formulate their own ideas and make better progress. In the majority of lessons expectations for what students can learn are too low. The purpose of lessons is not made clear and students are unaware of what they need to achieve to demonstrate successful learning. Teachers do not know how to use assessment information to plan appropriate challenges for individuals and groups of different abilities. Instead they teach topics from the textbook regardless of students' prior learning. Teachers talk too much and students listen attentively. Students do not have sufficient opportunity to practice what they have learnt. Available resource is not used effectively to enhance learning. Progress in most lessons remains unsatisfactory.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. It lacks breadth and is not reviewed and adapted to ensure it meets the needs, interests, aspirations and learning styles of all students of all abilities. A satisfactory range of opportunities is provided to promote an understanding of UAE family and community values and traditions. The use of ICT to support learning is inadequate. Links with external agencies have increased in number. Students with outside interests and hobbies are encouraged to participate in activities and competitions and are often successful. The school does not provide adequate specialist support within school to further develop their gifts and talents. Provision for the one identified child with additional needs is satisfactory. Provision for children's learning in the KG is not matched to their stage of development. They have insufficient opportunities to develop their independence and to learn through investigation, structured and free play. As a result, their language and fine and gross-motor skills are underdeveloped.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

There is a positive ethos in school. Most staff take their duty of care for students seriously, and in particular their personal development. Behaviour management is good in most classes. There are no major concerns about bullying. Checks are made on the suitability of staff and a central record is kept. There is a child protection policy but not all staff understand its meaning. Training has not been provided to help them identify signs of abuse. Allegations of abuse of children by staff are thoroughly investigated and, if proven, a warning is issued. Further action is taken if necessary. Attendance is recorded and effectively monitored. The system to track punctuality is weak. Boys and girls have opportunities for prayer. First aid facilities are good and medicines are stored safely. Chemicals are not always stored safely and supervision and health and safety on school transport require improvement. Students receive adequate guidance and support when applying to universities and colleges, though not enough is done to induct new students into school.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The quality of the school's buildings and premises is very unsatisfactory. Most rooms are of adequate size and sufficient in number to support the curriculum for science and ICT. Facilities for PE are inadequate as there is no gymnasium. The new outdoor play area for KG is a significant improvement and has enhanced the opportunity for children to learn through play and practical activity. The premises are cleaned to a satisfactory standard. Monitoring of health and safety is very unsatisfactory. Systems are not embedded and several important safety checks and procedures have not been put in place. The security of the premises is inadequate in ensuring that intruders are prevented from gaining access.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school's resources are unsatisfactory. There are sufficient qualified teachers for the number of students but some classes are too big and the rooms are overcrowded. A few

teachers await approval from ADEC. The range of high quality resources is limited. The two science laboratories and lecture halls have an adequate supply of equipment and materials to support the curriculum. All classrooms have an overhead projector but there is no access to technology for students to enhance and support their learning and to carry out research. The number of machines in the ICT labs does not allow for individual use during lessons. The library stock is insufficient for the number and interests of students. There are too few resources to support a rich and varied PE curriculum. Supervision and attention to health and safety on school transport is inconsistent.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The owner and the Principal are committed to improving the school's performance. A significant amount of funding has been allocated to enhance and extend the facilities and resources. The Principal, supported by other school leaders, has been instrumental in bringing about several changes in a short time. School leaders have been successful in establishing mainly positive relationships and promoting an appreciation and knowledge of the heritage and values of the UAE. Finances are audited appropriately.

There is a Board of Trustees which is representative of most stakeholders. It does not have a clear and objective view of the school's performance, nor does it have a clearly-defined role. Evaluation of the school's effectiveness is not sufficiently analytical and is not based on any accurate comparative data. School leaders, including subjects leaders, have limited awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and so have no firm foundation on which to base a strategy for improvement. Professional development opportunities have only recently been provided and so show limited signs of positive impact across the school. Most teachers do not understand how students learn. Reports to parents about students' progress are lacking in detail and targets for improvement.

Comments and complaints from parents and students are taken seriously and action is taken to address them when appropriate and possible. There are satisfactory links with external partners and agencies. Concerns remain for the systems and procedures to ensure health and safety. The school's leadership demonstrates an unsatisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement without additional external support.

Progress since the last inspection

Attainment and progress in Arabic and Social Studies is now satisfactory and older students make good progress in mathematics. A shaded, fenced outdoor play area has been created for KG and appropriate-sized toilets have been installed. There is a Child Protection Policy and allegations of abuse of children by staff are thoroughly investigated. These are some of the discernible improvements made against the recommendations of the last inspection. These are not enough for the school to be satisfactory overall and the school continues to be in need of significant improvement.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. School leaders need to evaluate the effectiveness of the school using objective data in order to make an accurate judgment about its standards and how they compare to UAE and international standards.
2. Ensure all school leaders and teachers have a clear and shared understanding about what constitutes effective learning and teaching.
3. Provide effective, high quality professional development to help teachers to:
 - i. understand what is meant by Assessment for Learning
 - ii. plan challenging, purposeful, practical and exciting lessons which motivate and interest students of all abilities and enable them to make better progress.
4. Review, adapt and enrich the curriculum so that it provides more opportunities within and beyond the school to develop the skills needed for the 21st Century - creativity, investigation, discovery, use of technology, teamwork, independent learning, research and higher-order thinking;
5. Ensure all aspects of Health, Safety and Protection are embedded, systematically and consistently adhered to and monitored. Ensure issues are addressed in a timely manner.
6. Ensure all staff understand what is meant by Child Protection and provide training so that they are aware of their responsibilities in protecting children against abuse;
7. Provide a wider range of high quality resources that will enhance students' learning and deepen their understanding. Improve and extend the facilities for PE as a means of promoting healthy lifestyles.

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 accommodation 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								