



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



Inspection Report

Al Manara Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

إقرأ

Al Manara Private School

Inspection Date	17 – 20 May 2015
School ID#	04
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	1759
Age Range	3 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Ahmed Zakariya Haroun
School Address	Behind Baniyas Private Licensing Authority, West Baniyas, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 585 8760
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Official Email (ADEC)	almanara.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	28 – 31 October 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

The main strengths of the school are:

- the safe and secure learning environment
- students' behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and relationships with each other and adults
- Grade 12 students' attainment in national examinations and high aspirations for the future.

The main areas for improvement are:

- students' attainment and progress in core subjects, especially in grades 1 to 9
 - distribution and delegation of senior leadership responsibilities, particularly for academic affairs and teaching and learning
 - professional development of teachers to ensure consistency and quality of teaching and learning, including appropriate expectations of student achievement
 - provision of support and challenge for students with special educational needs or those who are more able.
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by 5 inspectors. They observed 92 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, the heads of subjects, teachers, support staff, students, parents and the owner. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, reviewed the 686 responses to the parents' questionnaires and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal was involved throughout the inspection process and 1 joint lesson observation was conducted with a senior member of staff.

Description of the School

Al Manara School was opened in 1982 initially as a villa school in Abu Dhabi. It relocated to its current site in West Baniyas in August 2012, in an ex government school building. It is planned to move to 2 new buildings in Shamkha and Mohammad Bin Zayed City in 2016-17. Al Manara School aims to 'create a pioneering educational foundation in thinking performance and outcome'. Its mission is to 'develop performance that guarantees quality in outcomes, achieves partnership with local society for a qualifying generation, who owns knowledge and skills and who respect values and develop patriotism'.

The student population is 1759. There are 1048 boys and 711 girls on roll. There are 124 children in KG, 562 students in Primary Grades 1-5, 547 students in Middle Grades 6-9 and 526 students in Upper Grades 10-12. The language of instruction is Arabic. In grades 1 to 5, students are taught mathematics and science in English. Students are assessed using internal school examinations and Ministry of Education (MoE) examinations and some are selected to be internationally assessed each year for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Almost all students are Muslim (99.4%) and 96% are of Arabic heritage. Of the total numbers, 4% of students are Emirati. Other nationalities represented at the school include 26% Syrian, 25% Egyptian, 23% Jordanian, 6% Palestinian, 7% Sudanese, 4% Yemeni and 1% Iraqi. There are further small numbers from Lebanon, Somalia, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Ukraine, Romania and Australia.

The school identifies 47 students who have some degree of special educational need (SEN): 12 have specific learning difficulties, 19 moderate learning difficulties, 1 severe learning difficulty, 3 speaking and communication difficulties, 3 hearing impairments, 2 visual impairments, 1 multi-sensory impairment and 6 physical disabilities. The school has identified 143 gifted or talented students, particularly for artistic talent, handwriting, recitation, computing or sports. There are no conditions for admission to the school. The MoE requires that students who have studied a different curriculum take a test to determine their academic suitability

for admission. Children in Kindergarten (KG) take a baseline test to identify their entry level.

The school has 96 teachers, of whom 70 have been at the school more than 15 years. Staff turnover is low; 4 left at the end of last academic year and 12 new staff were appointed due to the increase in student numbers. There are 6 teaching assistants who support KG classes and 13 administrative staff. There is 1 security guard and 1 maintenance worker. The principal has been in post for 7 years. There is one vice –principal. The school Board of Directors comprises 8 people: the owner, the principal, 4 parents, and 2 teachers. They meet each trimester or on request. School fees range from AED 11,560 in KG to AED 17,750 in upper grades. These include transportation, books and uniform and are within the low to medium range.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

Al Manara Private School is in need of significant improvement. Students' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory overall. This is due to inconsistent and ineffective teaching. Students make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and social studies throughout the school. Progress is also satisfactory in the upper grades in all core subjects, except information and communication technology (ICT). There have been improvements since the last inspection, but mainly in health and safety and premises issues, resources and protection, care, guidance and support. The owner and school leaders are committed to school improvement. They are caring and proactive. The school leadership do not have the capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of the school using objective data. They do not make accurate judgements about school's performance. There is not a clear and shared understanding about what constitutes effective teaching and learning. Leaders have not addressed the 3 key recommendations from the last inspection.

Students' attainment & progress

Children in KG make satisfactory progress and their attainment meets age related expectations. In grades 1 to 9, students' attainment in all subjects is below international standards and age related expectations. This is due to unsatisfactory teaching. Their progress is unsatisfactory across all subjects, except English, mathematics and social studies, where progress is satisfactory.

In Arabic, students listen and answer teachers' questions. Writing across primary and middle grades is limited in length and students do not always use punctuation accurately. In Islamic education, while a majority of students understand Islamic

concepts, many do not apply these consistently. In science, most students understand basic scientific facts. Grade 9 students can name chemical elements. They cannot write and balance chemical equations. Across the grades, many students are unable to apply their learning to solve practical problems. They also lack skills in investigation and prediction. In ICT students' skills, knowledge and understanding are inconsistent. Most students are able to carry out simple tasks, which are below age related expectations. Students do not use ICT across different subjects.

From grades 10 to 12, students' progress accelerates and is more consistent across all subjects, except for ICT. By grade 12, students achieve high scores in MoE examinations. A large percentage go on to university. Many students successfully pass the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) examination.

Throughout the school, students are given the opportunity to develop their English speaking skills. The result is that by grade 12, students speak fluently. They have a wide vocabulary and can articulate personal opinions. They can write for a range of purposes and audiences. In mathematics, most students from grade 1 to 10 skillfully use mental calculation. They are less skilled in investigating number. Across the school students are insufficiently skilled in applying their mathematical knowledge in real life contexts. In social studies by Grade 9, students have a sound understanding of the economics and geography of the UAE.

Attainment and progress in non-core subjects is also unsatisfactory. In physical education (PE), students' sporting skills are not developed systematically. Artwork is limited to unchallenging craft-based activities and is well below international standards. Students are able to collaborate well when given the opportunity. Their abilities to work independently, be creative or apply critical thinking, investigation and research skills are limited.

There is a lack of robust assessment data to measure student progress. In lessons and from work seen, students with special educational needs (SEN) make slower progress in most subjects. The school lacks appropriate resources to meet their needs. The school has not established criteria for identifying students who learn more slowly than others. Their small steps of progress are not measured from their individual starting points. More able students are not sufficiently challenged by the work provided and so make unsatisfactory progress.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is satisfactory. The school is a calm, orderly learning environment. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Students are polite, friendly and respectful. They support each other both in classrooms and around the school. It is a harmonious friendly community.

They have positive attitudes to learning. They are confident and enjoy school. This is evidenced by a high average attendance of 98%. Students respect and are knowledgeable about UAE culture and traditions. A group of grade 12 Emirati students invited inspectors in the school's heritage tent for traditional refreshments. They spoke fluently in English and Arabic to explain all the artefacts and costumes in the tent. In assembly, students of all ages enthusiastically sing the national anthem. Students eagerly assume leadership roles. There is an active student council. Students' media and news committee are proactive in recording and reporting on daily events. The students' behaviour committee helps supervision around the school. There is an active ecology committee. There are limited opportunities for students to take responsibility in the classroom, in group work or for leading learning. They are developing the personal skills and confidence for the next stages of education and employment. Not all have the academic and technological skills.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. There is no consistency across the school. Teachers do not plan lessons to ensure a range of challenging activities that meet students' needs. The pace of lessons is slow and expectations are low. Teachers talk for too long and teaching is didactic. The result is passive and compliant learners. Teachers, particularly in grades 10 to 12, have strong subject knowledge. Their classroom management skills are effective.

Daily repetitive routines and practices, for example in KG classes, ensure that children learn and feel secure and confident. Familiar refocusing activities by the teacher attracts their attention and keeps their interest. They learn to work and play together, sharing and taking turns. In most English and social studies classes throughout the school, and in some other subjects, students work collaboratively in groups, brainstorming ideas, preparing debates and presentations. They support and enhance each other's learning. This is not a consistent feature across the school.

Teachers do not always differentiate their methodology, activities and materials. They rely on the textbook and worksheets. Consequently, more able students are not challenged. Students with special educational needs (SEN) are not given appropriate additional support. Assessment data is not used to plan activities in the classroom to meet individual students' needs. Students' work, especially in grade 1 to 9, is not marked regularly and is often just ticked. Marking does not show students how they can improve their work.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is narrow and heavily reliant on textbooks. It is not reviewed regularly and is not sufficiently coordinated to enable students to make the progress of which they are capable. Mathematics and science lessons taught in English are not linked with lessons of the same subjects taught in Arabic. There is limited cross curricular planning or delivery. The curriculum is not modified to support all students with additional needs and those who need specific help are not adequately supported. Gifted and talented students are not challenged. The planned curriculum does not give all students the opportunity to develop the full range of 21st century skills, especially critical thinking, independent learning and the regular use of ICT. There is a range of enrichment activities, such as scientific and environmental trips, sporting teams and competitions. UAE heritage and culture is promoted in many areas of the curriculum and in heritage displays and artefacts around the school. The KG curriculum is appropriate for the children's age. It provides opportunities for free play, investigation, creativity and exploration. They learn through collaboration and a variety of structured practical and engaging activities. There are fewer opportunities for child-initiated activities.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students are satisfactory. Students are well cared for. There is a positive ethos. It is a safe and secure environment in which to learn. The systems to improve, attendance and punctuality are effective. The school clinic is efficiently managed. The school has separate prayer rooms for boys and girls. Students take the opportunity to pray. There is a child protection policy and staff are aware of their responsibilities. Students report that there is no bullying. The school is vigilant in its duty of care. For example, at break times, the school provides seating and shaded tented activity tables for students in the central common areas. Many staff are present, talking to students and organizing activities. The student discipline committee supervises the canteen queues. The ecology committee helps to pick up any litter. It all creates a calm, positive, purposeful atmosphere. Careers and academic guidance is limited to the provision of basic information. Students say they want more help with university applications. Support for SEN students is unsatisfactory. There is no full time SEN coordinator.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The quality of the school's buildings and premises is unsatisfactory. They are old and do not support the curriculum well. The school moved into the present buildings in September 2012. Since the last inspection, improvements have been

to sporting facilities. There is now a large grass sports field, with 2 football pitches. It is used by students and by the local community after school. The school has created a small gymnasium. There are 2 science laboratories, and 2 lecture rooms for the girls' and boys' sections. These science facilities are inadequate for the number of students on roll.

The school has addressed the safety concerns reported in the last inspections. There are new entrances and exits for the buses for boys' and girls' sections. These are now safe and effective. The number of toilets, washrooms and facilities has been increased. There are sufficient classrooms. A few are small and cramped and restrict student movement and group work. Display is adequate and stimulates students' questions and learning. There are no lifts. Access for students with physical disabilities to all parts of the buildings is not possible. The cleanliness of the premises is satisfactory. The 2 central playgrounds are continually swept throughout the day to remove the sand. There are arrangements to improve and maintain the buildings. There is a resident maintenance officer in post. School records show that electrical equipment is tested regularly. Ventilation and cooling systems are not always working effectively. School security has improved. External security is effective. There is a resident security guard who checks all visitors' authorisation. There is a comprehensive system of CCTV security cameras throughout the school. The school is now a safe and secure learning environment.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resources are satisfactory. The school is fully staffed and turnover is low. This results in staff stability and positive, established relationships between staff, students and their families. The school has recently appointed assistants to support KG classes. These, plus an additional adult helper in each classroom, effectively support children's learning and development of personal and social skills. KG classrooms contain a wide range of learning resources for active hands-on learning. In each classroom, there is a bilingual book corner. There is a well-equipped play area. Grades 1 to 9 lack many classroom learning resources, such as educational games, manipulatives, artefacts and additional reading books.

The school recently appointed a full time librarian. The library is now an attractive place to enjoy reading. It is regularly used by timetabled classes. The school has an electronic register of all staff, their qualifications, skills and personal details. Vetting procedures are stringent. All classrooms have projectors, which teachers use to enhance their lessons. There are 2 ICT rooms with 60 computers. This is not adequate. In ICT lessons some students have to share computers. A few students use their own iPads in classrooms. Not all students have regular access to ICT equipment to support their learning. The school conducts regular fire

evacuations. There are now tight procedures for monitoring and supervising students' use of buses.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. School leaders do not have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The self evaluation form SEF is inaccurate. It is not supported by robust evidence. Consequently the school development plan (SDP) does not identify the key priorities facing the school, namely to raise attainment and improve teaching and learning.

The owner and school leaders are committed to school improvement. The school runs smoothly and efficiently on a day-to-day basis. There is a board of directors with representation of parents and teachers. It meets regularly each trimester. The principal is highly visible around the school. He is available to students, teachers and parents, and is respected. Leadership is centralized. There is a lack of distributed leadership and delegation of responsibilities. No one has overall responsibility for academic affairs and teaching and learning. Subject coordinators, section coordinators and middle leaders' roles are unclear. Recent professional development programmes are not impacting on the quality of teaching and learning and on achievement.

Parents are supportive of the school. Complaints are addressed and appropriate action taken. Some parents feel that they are not given sufficient information about their sons' or daughters' progress. School reports lack detail and targets for improvement. There are satisfactory links with external partners. There is no strategic plan for the move into the new buildings in 2016. School leadership does not demonstrate the capacity to improve the school's performance without substantial external support.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has improved in some ways since the last inspection. All the health and safety issues have been addressed. Health, safety and protection are now satisfactory. The school has extended the sporting facilities, by building a large sports field and a small gymnasium. It has not made progress on the first three key recommendations in the last report. The school has not accurately evaluated its effectiveness using objective data. All leaders and teachers do not have a clear view about what constitute effective teaching and learning. There is not high quality professional development for teachers. The principal and vice principal alone do not have the capacity to make the necessary improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise students' attainment and progress in core subjects, especially in grades 1 to 9 by:
 - i. ensuring all lessons are planned consistently, using a whole school lesson planning proforma
 - ii. using data to identify which subjects and students are underachieving
 - iii. setting targets for students in all grades and in all subjects
 - iv. monitoring and tracking of students' progress
 - v. improving literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all subjects.
2. Ensure the distribution and delegation of senior leadership responsibilities, particularly for academic affairs and teaching and learning by:
 - i. appointing a second vice principal with responsibility for academic affairs
 - ii. distributing and delegating leadership responsibilities and tasks
 - iii. clarifying roles and writing job descriptions for all senior and middle leaders
 - iv. providing time and support for all leaders to undertake their responsibilities
 - v. evaluating rigorously the school's provision in order to know its strengths and weaknesses.
3. Improve the professional development of teachers to ensure consistency and quality of teaching and learning, including appropriate expectations of student achievement by:
 - i. ensuring all school leaders and teachers have a clear and shared understanding about what constitutes effective teaching and learning
 - ii. providing a regular programme of professional development for all teachers that is specific to individual needs
 - iii. sharing and observing the effective practice that already exists.

4. Improve the provision of support and challenge for students with additional needs by:
 - i. appointing a fulltime special needs coordinator and creating a learning support team
 - ii. identifying students who are slow learners and need additional support
 - iii. planning activities in lessons that challenge the more able students, and by providing resources to support those who need additional help.

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								