



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



Inspection Report

Al Manhal International School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Manhal International School

Inspection Date	21 – 24 April 2014
School ID#	93
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	2403
Age Range	3 to 17 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Mohammed Abu Kassab
School Address	Street 25, Al Mushrif, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Telephone Number	+971 (02) 499 8777
Fax Number	+971 (02) 447 9024
Official Email (ADEC)	Almanhalint.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.almanhalschool.ae
Date of last inspection	29 October – 1 November 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 B;	GRADE 5
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the principal provides strong leadership and is successful in harnessing the support of parents, students and teachers
- the extent to which the owner and his representative share the principal's ambitions for the school, provide guidance and the financial support needed to improve the quality of education
- the standard of students' work compares well with other schools that teach the same curriculum and is in line with international expectations in English, mathematics and science
- the close attention paid to students' health and safety
- attendance is well above average

The main areas for improvement are:

- opportunities for children in KG to make choices and express themselves creatively
- individual feedback and targets for students to help them improve
- quality of the set work to ensure suitable challenge and meet individual needs of students with special education needs and those who are gifted and talented

Introduction

The school was inspected by 6 inspectors. They observed 112 lessons, conducted meetings with the owner's representative, senior staff, subject supervisors, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed 1,554 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal and deputy principal were involved throughout the inspection process.

Description of the School

Al Manhal International Private School founded in 1979, is located in the Al Mushrif area of Abu Dhabi and delivers the Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum. The school's aims include the aspiration 'to provide an excellent learning experience with the purpose of preparing a generation that is committed to its religion, belonging to its country and creative in its thinking and skills'.

The school is owned by the Bin Aweidha group of companies. A recently formed Board of trustees oversees the development of the school. Members of this board represent the school's leadership, teachers, parents and the local community. The Principal has been in post since September 2012. The school development partner has been working with the school since January 2014.

The school has 2403 students enrolled; this represents an increase of 14% over the last two years. Almost all students are Muslim and all speak Arabic as a first language. Of these 56% of the student population are boys. There are 207 children in KG, 755 in Grades 1 – 5, 733 in Grades 6 – 9 and 708 in Grades 10 – 12. There are 26 nationalities represented, with the majority coming from Jordan 25%, Syria 21%, Egypt 15% and Sudan 9%, 6% are UAE nationals and further smaller proportions from other countries. The school has formally identified 2% of students as having special education needs (SEN), one third of these with dyslexia and 4% of students are identified as having specific gifts or talents in a range of subjects including art, mathematics, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). Students undertake the MoE tests and exams; they do not undertake any additional external assessments.

Children's admission to KG is subject to interview and the completion of diagnostic tests in order to identify and support any learning difficulties. Students who wish to enter other grades are also interviewed and they must also obtain at least 80% in school tests in Arabic, Islamic education, English, mathematics and science. Annual fees range from AED 8,635 in KG to AED 16,225 for Grade 12, exclusive of transport, books and uniform. This is in the low to medium category.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress is satisfactory across all subjects. Analysis of the Ministry examination results indicates that standards in Grades 1 to 12 for Arabic, Islamic education, English, mathematics and science have been gradually rising over the last three years. In 2012/13, Grade 12 students' overall performance in these subjects was above other schools following the same curriculum. Over the last three years, the standard of girls' work in the science stream has been consistently higher than boys' in all subjects. Students with SEN and those who are gifted and talented make less progress than other students, as the work is not adequately pitched to their individual needs.

Work seen during the inspection indicates that standards in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies meet ADEC's expectations. For example, Grade 5 students are able to recite the Holy Qur'an accurately and correctly apply Arabic grammar rules when forming sentences. In contrast, less able students have difficulty expressing themselves and make basic errors in spelling and punctuation when writing. An example of this was observed when students were discussing the achievements of well known Islamic figures. Standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with international averages. Students' critical thinking, analysis and problem-solving skills have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory.

Senior leaders analyse performance data increasingly effectively. They systematically log each student's exam results to monitor their performance over time. They also analyse completed exam papers in order to identify general areas of weakness and class teachers address these in subsequent lessons.

Students' personal development

Personal development is satisfactory and improving. Most students are sensible and polite and treat each other and adults with respect. They enjoy coming to school, are proud of the way it is improving and have positive attitudes to their studies. Attendance at 96% has been well above average over the last two years. They are respectful of their surroundings and relish themed days such as 'Apple Day'. Students say there is very little bullying and that the few incidents are managed effectively.

Students work well in groups during, for example, science lessons and share resources amicably. They willingly help each other and value each other's contributions. A few boys misbehave during lessons if they find the activities lack

interest. Students enjoy participating in extra-curricular clubs, such as the environment or the Al Manhal newspaper club. Students are enthusiastic about serving on the school councils and have initiated some changes such as additional extra-curricular activities.

The quality of teaching and learning

Working relationships are good and learning takes place within a positive and supportive atmosphere. Teachers know their subjects well and most explain the learning objectives at the start of lessons. This helps students understand the purpose of the activities and the knowledge and skills to be developed. For example, during a Grade 12 science lesson, students successfully extracted nuclear material from kiwi fruit and they were able to understand and explain what they had learnt. Teachers expect students to be positive and work hard. Most of the students respond accordingly and this is reflected in their satisfactory progress.

Teachers have good access to well targeted professional development. This has a positive impact upon students' learning. For example, teachers regularly use ICT during lessons and this is adding zest and interest to the curriculum. Teachers are also using test and examination information increasingly effectively. At the start of the academic year, students undertake tests that enable teachers to assess the level of their skills and knowledge. Teachers then address areas of relative weakness during future lessons. In addition, teachers prepare education plans for individual students who failed their exams at the end of the previous term. This system is effective as many of these students go on to succeed.

On a day-to-day level, teachers' use of assessment information is inconsistent. Only a few teachers provide work that meets the needs of students with differing abilities. Most of the teachers provide a single task for the whole class and this particularly affects the progress of students who have special education needs (SEN) or specific gifts and talents. In addition, teachers provide few written comments when marking work and do not provide individual targets for improvement. As a result, students do not know how well they are progressing and exactly what they have to do to improve their work.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. All students enjoy equal access to the full Ministry curriculum and teachers are increasingly supplementing the workbooks with additional activities. These add colour and depth to the standard curriculum. For example, a space agency brought a telescope into school and students watched a 3-D film of the solar system. In addition, students who are underperforming receive support from

more able classmates and attend extra classes held during break time. There are several heritage areas and students develop a satisfactory understanding of UAE culture and community values.

The KG curriculum includes few opportunities for children to choose their own activity or learn through investigation and structured play. The school day usually revolves around single, whole class activities and there are few opportunities to work in groups or be creative. Activities do not always support children's developing skills; for example, KG1 classes learn the names of letters of the English alphabet, not the sounds they make and this slows their progress in reading. The KG curriculum does not build adequately on prior learning and some of the activities in KG1 are repeated in KG2.

For older students, the curriculum in English provides few opportunities for extended reading and writing. The science curriculum provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for students to undertake practical work and teachers pay good attention to health and safety. Students with SEN and the most able make slower progress because the curriculum is insufficiently matched to their needs.

There is a satisfactory range of enrichment activities and a strong emphasis on the importance of healthy eating. The range of extra-curricular clubs is broadly satisfactory and increasing; for example, students have recently established a water polo club.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school provides a calm and supportive environment. Security of the site is good and students feel safe and well cared for. They say that procedures to manage behaviour are fair and that bullying is rare.

The pastoral system underpins students' satisfactory personal development; the level of academic support provided to students with SEN and gifts and talents is unsatisfactory. The school works closely with parents of formally identified SEN students. Other students identified by the school as requiring support are not formally recorded and this hinders the extent to which the school can provide targeted intervention.

Procedures for the recruitment of staff are thorough and all the necessary checks are undertaken and recorded. The school clinics are clean and there are suitable arrangements for the administration of first aid and the dispensing of medicines. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are effective. Child protection procedures are clear. Students receive satisfactory career guidance. Several universities visit the school and most of the students move onto higher education.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

Since the last inspection the school has significantly improved the premises. A refurbishment of the KG area has resulted in a well-designed and inviting shaded space for outdoor learning. It incorporates several zones, including heritage and garden areas and separate space for climbing equipment. There is a track for wheeled equipment to enable children to develop physically and learn about road safety. The premises are safe, very clean and well maintained. There are now separate clinics for boys and girls. All the required health and safety checks are undertaken.

There are sufficient classrooms and suitable facilities for practical activities such as science, art, music and ICT. A few rooms are rather small and this restricts the extent to which teachers are able to plan activities, such as role-play or group work. In addition, the science laboratory for older girls and both gymnasias for younger students are cramped. They cannot comfortably accommodate a whole class and this limits activities to, for example, static stretching exercises. There are a few vibrant displays of students' work that actively promote learning.

There is sufficient outdoor space. Large canopies provide shade to all outdoor assembly and recreation areas. With the exception of KG, these have hard paved surfaces that have the potential to cause serious injury.

The school's resources to support its aims

There are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. Professional development is relevant and includes areas such as constructive use of assessment and ICT resources. There are also sufficient numbers of technical support staff for practical subjects, such as ICT. Each KG class has an additional adult who helps to prepare resources and organise the classroom. They do not directly support children's learning and this slows progress as the teacher does not usually have sufficient time to address the needs of each individual. This is also sometimes the case during science lessons for older students.

There are sufficient Arabic and English reading and reference books in the library. Older students benefit from the loan of some books from Zayed University. The recent purchase of a significant number of interactive white boards is improving the quality and quantity of ICT resources and there is internet access throughout the school. Teachers and students regularly use computers and data shows during lessons to support and enhance learning. At times, for example during a Grade 10 Arabic lesson, there are insufficient additional resources and learning is limited to the workbook.

The 4 science laboratories are sufficient to deliver the curriculum. There is also a suitable range of other resources including chemicals, which are stored safely.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The Principal provides strong leadership. He is very visible and is highly regarded by parents, staff and students. He is very effective in communicating his vision and drive to senior leaders, teachers, students and parents. The school community share his pride in improvements made since the last inspection and his ambitions for the future. Senior leaders effectively manage the professional development programme and ensure its relevance to school priorities. They monitor the impact on teachers' classroom practice and this has been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

The owner has very recently established a board of trustees. Prior to the advent of the board, the principal worked very closely with the owner's representative and he continues to do so. They make an effective team and share high aspirations; they are determined to create an outstanding school. The owner's representative has a thorough and objective working knowledge of the school. He has sanctioned the investments required to fund the many improvements made since the last inspection.

Judgments in the self-evaluation form (SEF) are accurate. The principal welcomes advice provided by external agencies, including the school development partner. The school development plan (SDP) reflects priorities within the SEF and has recently been updated. The goals are relevant and are shared with the school community. The budget is carefully managed and funding is closely aligned with the school's strategic priorities.

Senior leaders are increasingly analytical in their approach to monitoring performance data. The principal and academic supervisors track each student's examination marks and hold teachers to account for their success or failure. Individual subject supervisors are effective in cascading training down to class teachers. They are not directly involved in forming the SDP; they are well informed about its contents. They appreciate the dedication of senior leaders, the impetus for change and feel well supported.

1554 parents returned the inspection questionnaire. Almost all expressed their satisfaction with the quality of education provided.

Progress since the last inspection

There have been improvements in all performance standards since the last inspection. The most significant have concerned students' personal development, protection, care and guidance, the quality of the buildings and premises, and leadership and management. Students' achievement is also improving and senior leaders are identifying and supporting those who are falling behind more promptly. Most of the issues raised by the last inspection have been successfully addressed. There is still some way to go regarding the use of assessment, the consistency of teachers' marking, provision of targets for improvement and target setting. Overall, the school has demonstrated good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve provision in KG by:
 - i. ensuring teachers assess children on a regular basis and use the information gathered in future planning
 - ii. providing more opportunities for children to learn through planned play and investigations.
2. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by:
 - i. ensuring teachers mark and assess students' work, set targets for the future and provide clear guidance regarding what they need to do to improve
 - ii. ensuring all teachers use assessment information to plan activities that meet the needs of all students, especially those with SEN and specific gifts and talents.

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								