



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



Inspection Report

Al Nahda National School for Girls

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Al Nahda National School for Girls

Inspection Date	26 – 29 May 2014
School ID#	25
Licensed Curriculum	British and American
Number of Students	4,193
Age Range	4 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed (Grade 4 – 12 Girls)
Principal	Sandra R. Zaher
School Address	PO Box 815, Airport Road, Street 21, Al Mushrif, Abu Dhabi
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Official Email (ADEC)	alnahdagirls.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.nahdaschools.com
Date of last inspection	Primary 19 – 22 November 2012 Secondary 15 – 18 October 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:

- senior leaders provide effective strategic leadership which has a positive impact on school improvement
- school leaders and teachers demonstrate commitment, dedication and engagement in improving their practice to enhance learning opportunities for students
- students following the British curriculum achieve well in IGCSE and A-level examinations
- the school has established a positive culture of care, where students' safety, protection and guidance are supported well by all adults.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the attainment levels for students following the American curriculum, especially for the more able
 - the need to ensure a greater proportion of lessons promote good academic progress, especially for the more able
 - the need to ensure teachers and managers are held more accountable for students' academic achievement
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 9 inspectors. They observed 138 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject coordinators, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, analysed the 1,144 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The director was involved throughout the inspection process and undertook 3 joint observations of lessons.

Description of the School

Al Nahda National School for Girls opened in 1983 in the Al Mushrif district of Abu Dhabi. The school's vision is 'to provide an excellent international education through its American and British programs to meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students and inspire them to become life-long learners' and the mission is 'to provide strong academic programs based on national and international standards that emphasise a broad foundation and depth of knowledge to prepare students for post-secondary studies'.

The student population is 4,193; 75% are girls. The school has students from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 12. KG to Grade 3 is mixed gender, with Grades 4 to 12 being girls only. There are 875 students in KG, 1757 in Grades 1 to 5, 869 in Grades 6 to 9 and 692 in Grades 10 to 12. The school follows both the British and American curriculums. The Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum is used in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies.

The school caters for students from several different nationalities: 32% Emirati, 15% Egyptian 12% Jordanian, 13% Pakistani and 28% from other nationalities follow the British curriculum; 61% Emirati, 10% Egyptian 6% Jordanian, 23% from other nationalities follow the American curriculum. Almost all students are Muslim. The school has identified 5% of students as having special educational needs (SEN), with most having learning difficulties; 5% require language support. Admission to the school in Grades 1 to 12 is determined by interview and an entrance assessment.

The director has been in post for almost a year. The leadership team comprises the director, deputy director and 5 academic administrators. The school has 269 teachers, with a 5% turnover last year. The fees range from AED 14,000 to AED 24,000, which are in the medium to high categories.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Students work at age-appropriate levels in most lessons. In English, mathematics, science, Arabic, Islamic education, social studies, information and communication and technology (ICT), attainment and progress are at expected levels. Attainment and progress in other non-core subjects are satisfactory. The majority of children have little English on entry to the school and make satisfactory progress in the acquisition of English language skills in KG. Most students make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school; the pace of progress slows in Grades 6 to 8. Students following the British curriculum make good progress and their outcomes in IGCSE, AS and A-Levels are in line with international standards. Progress is slower for students following the American curriculum, but most students meet graduation requirements.

Students adequately acquire basic skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, numeracy, thinking and use of ICT. Girls and boys make expected progress in the primary grades. Girls' progress improves significantly in the higher grades, particularly for the students following the British curriculum. SEN students and those needing additional help with language development make better than average progress because of well-targeted support. More able students make insufficient progress in many lessons because learning activities lack challenge and are not matched to their specific needs.

The school is developing effective initiatives to assess student progress. Recent developments, including Cambridge Checkpoint Assessments and International Benchmark Tests provide greater rigour and validity to the school's own judgements on student progress.

Students' personal development

The personal development of students is satisfactory. Relationships between adults and students are generally warm and respectful. Students are very positive about the help, guidance and support they receive from staff. Many students show interest and enthusiasm in their learning. Most behave well, follow instructions and engage eagerly in activities. Behaviour is less secure in lessons where there is insufficient challenge to keep students fully focused. A small minority of girls in the higher grades are poorly behaved, lack respect for teachers and appear disengaged in lessons.

Students are knowledgeable about the UAE, its culture and show respect for its values. This is promoted effectively through assemblies, the curriculum, the 'my

identity' program and National Day celebrations. Students' knowledge and understanding of other cultures is inconsistent.

Students regularly receive certificates and awards in assemblies to recognize their successes. The school promotes safe and healthy lifestyles in many ways. In 'Health Week' selected students promote healthy choices and vendors supply the school with a variety of nutritious food options. The school provides a range of sporting and cultural activities to enhance students' learning opportunities. Attendance is well above average at 96%.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school and in all subjects. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of their subjects. They display learning objectives in all lessons. These are not always consistently articulated, written in student friendly language or have measurable outcomes. Teachers are beginning to use a variety of learning strategies and create more opportunities for students to work collaboratively and independently. In some lessons, activities are insufficiently well planned to consistently engage all students.

In KG, children are enthusiastic learners. The planning of group work and differentiation of tasks is at an early stage of development. Activities do not always match the children's needs or provide meaningful tasks to accelerate their progress. Baseline assessments are not used effectively in KG to establish the starting points to inform planning for individual children's learning needs.

In the best lessons, students are highly engaged in well planned activities that are matched to their abilities. They work collaboratively to solve problems, draw conclusions and report their findings. In other lessons, particularly in Grades 4 to 8, learning activities provide inconsistent challenge, pace and engagement. Assessments of students' prior knowledge and skills are inconsistently used to plan effective learning activities matched to their identified needs. Learning activities often provide access to the curriculum for many students, but create insufficient challenge for more able students.

Teachers undertake regular assessments. These are not always effectively used to set students' targets for improvement. Teachers have many opportunities to access professional development. They also undertake peer observations to share best practice.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The school's broad, balanced and cohesive curriculum is regularly reviewed and offers a satisfactory programme for addressing the learning needs of most students. It follows the Cambridge primary programme in Grades 1 to 8. From

Grades 9 to 12 students follow either the British or American curriculum. The MoE curriculum is followed in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. The core curriculum is further enhanced by art, ICT, physical education (PE) and music from Grades 1 to 9. French or Urdu is added from Grade 5. Business studies, accounting, sociology, nutrition and separate sciences are options for senior students. The curriculum is modified well to meet the needs of SEN students and those who need help with their language development. It is not sufficiently adjusted to meet the needs of the more able. The curriculum delivery is inconsistent in providing opportunities for students to develop 21st Century skills across subjects.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities to stimulate students' interests and learning. They include robotics, poetry, eco-club, library, cookery, choir and jewellery making. The school has useful links with Abu Dhabi and Zayed Universities. The INJAZ organisation provides career development opportunities for Grades 6 to 11 students through a work experience programme.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school has made the protection, care, guidance and support of students a major priority since the last inspection. As a result, it is satisfactory and improving. The positive culture of care that has been established provides an environment where students' safety, protection and guidance are well supported by all adults. A strong pastoral care team is in place with clear responsibilities to promote students' welfare. The careers guidance counselling is providing good support to students' when making choices at Grade 9 and when applying for universities in Grade 12. Academic progress is monitored effectively by teachers, subject coordinators and senior leaders.

The school has established a behaviour policy; routines are not always consistently established or applied, particularly in the younger age groups. A few teachers have ineffective strategies for addressing the behaviour of some of the higher grade girls. Child protection policies are in place to ensure students are safe and secure. Staff have been trained in their application; a few are limited in their understanding of how to recognize students at risk. There is a prayer room in one area of the school, but there is insufficient dedicated provision for the high number of students in the school.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and premises are well maintained and provide a satisfactory environment for students' learning. Some classrooms are reasonably spacious. Others are too small for the number of students and limit their learning opportunities. Displays in many areas of the school are adequate and sometimes used well to celebrate students' achievements. A major campaign to keep the

campus litter free is well supported by students. The school is secure, with all exits staffed and visitors required to sign in. An assigned member of staff has responsibility for health and safety and all equipment is regularly checked.

There are 8 ICT laboratories, 4 upper and 1 lower school science laboratories, art and music rooms. KG rooms have class libraries. The libraries support learning for junior and middle grades. A further library supports senior and primary students. There are four gyms, a swimming pool and outdoor covered areas, including an equipped area for KG play. The 2 well- equipped school clinics are staffed by full-time trained nurses. Regular evacuation practices take place and procedures are well understood.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resources are satisfactory in supporting the school's aims. Teachers are adequate in number, secure in subject knowledge, qualified and demonstrate dedication to the school and students. A few classroom assistants in KG and the lower grades provide effective support for students; many undertake only administrative duties. The quantity and quality of resources in KG are insufficient, particularly manipulatives for developing mathematical concepts. The lack of a standardised reading programme is detrimental to the acceleration of students' acquisition of literacy skills, particularly in KG and the primary years. In other grades, resources are adequate in supporting learning.

The school has invested in ICT throughout all phases, providing increased availability and utilisation of technology. One of the ICT laboratories is equipped with iPads and there are a few computers in each library. There are 15 classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboards and all others have data projectors. Well equipped, dedicated science laboratories enhance the curriculum and enable students to learn through discovery. The school libraries have adequate resources, but have limitations in supporting students' development of 21st Century skills.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The effective strategic leadership of the director and deputy director is having a positive impact on school improvement. As a result, leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The Board of Directors has an objective and supportive view of the school and sets accountability goals aligned to the recommendations made in the previous inspection report. Senior and middle leaders, together with teaching staff demonstrate strong commitment to improving their practice and enhancing learning opportunities. Accountability goal setting procedures for teachers, middle and senior leaders are not sufficiently focused on raising student attainment levels.

The school runs well on a daily basis. It creates a calm, safe and caring environment that supports students' learning. Lesson observations are the responsibility of all senior and middle managers. They undertake regular 'pop-in' visits, together with formal observations and provide useful feedback to teachers. The lesson observations are not fully focused on the effectiveness of student learning and do not have plans and follow-up visits to ensure improvements are successfully implemented.

The self-evaluation form (SEF) highlights the improvements made since the last inspection. It does not provide sufficient measurable evidence to demonstrate the impact of the initiatives on student outcomes. The school development plan (SDP) is reasonably well structured and focused on key improvements.

Parents have very positive views on the quality of care and education provided for their children. They hold the leadership in high regard. Parents appreciate the open door policy, regular communications and progress updates. There are appropriate procedures in place for dealing with parental complaints.

Progress since the last inspection

There has been satisfactory and better progress since the last inspection. The school has established a coherent and effective management structure, with roles and responsibilities and well defined lines of accountability and communication. Whole school priorities are clearly defined in the SDP and appropriately target the key areas identified by the last inspection report. The monitoring of teaching and learning is a well established process carried out by all senior and middle leaders. Curriculum planning has improved, providing consistency, continuity and progression for students' learning.

The school now has a child protection policy. Staff received training, and most fully understand their responsibilities. The establishment of clear behaviour expectations creates a reasonably calm and well-ordered school environment. Robust monitoring procedures have led to improved attendance levels. The school has made some progress in improving teaching and learning strategies; more focus is needed to improve learning opportunities for different groups of students, particularly the more able.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise standard of attainment and progress for students following the American curriculum to match those following the British curriculum, with particular regard to the more able.
2. Improve teaching and learning so that a greater proportion of lessons are good or better by:
 - i. ensuring learning objectives are consistently articulated, written in student friendly language, fully understood by students and have measurable outcomes
 - ii. using assessments of students' prior knowledge and skills to plan effective learning activities matched to their identified needs
 - iii. creating learning activities that provide pace and appropriate challenge and fully engage all students throughout the lesson, particularly the more able
 - iv. using more effective baseline skills assessments in KG to ensure that each child has identified plans for accelerating their progress in literacy and numeracy.
3. Continue to improve leadership and management in order to increase accountability by:
 - i. creating goal-setting procedures for staff at all levels based on and measured by their success in raising student attainment levels
 - ii. focusing lesson observations on the effectiveness of student learning, identifying and planning improvements, and monitoring for successful implementation
 - iii. providing all leaders with high quality training on how to effectively observe teaching and learning.
4. Improve the quality and quantity of resources to more effectively deliver the KG curriculum.
5. Ensure there are sufficient dedicated areas across the school for Muslim students to pray

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								