



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



Private School Inspection Report

Al Nahda National School - Girls

Academic Year 2015 – 2016

lqraa

Al Nahda National School - Girls

Inspection Date	May 9, 2016	to	May 12, 2016
Date of previous inspection	May 26, 2014	to	May 29, 2014

General Information		Students		
School ID	25	Total number of students	4425	
Opening year of school	1983	Number of children in KG	874	
Principal	Sandra Zaher	Number of students in other phases	Primary:	1852
			Middle:	920
			High:	779
School telephone	+971 (0)2 447 7600	Age range	3 years 10 months to 19 years	
School Address	PO Box 815, Airport Road, Street 21, Abu Dhabi	Grades or Year Groups	KG to Grade 12	
Official email (ADEC)	alnahdagirls.pvt@adec.ac.ae	Gender	Mixed: KG to Grade 3 Female: Grades 4 to 12	
School website	ans.girlsnahdaschools.com	% of Emirati Students	32%	
Fee ranges (per annum)	Low to medium: AED 13,800 - AED 27,300	Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Egyptian: 16%	
			2. Jordanian: 13%	
			3. Pakistani: 7.5%	

Licensed Curriculum		Staff		
Main Curriculum	British	Number of teachers	318	
Other Curriculum	American	Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	43	
External Exams/ Standardised tests	IGCSE, O, AS, A, SAT1, EMSA	Teacher-student ratio	KG/ FS	1:19
			Other phases	1:12
Accreditation	NEASC, CIS, Cambridge CIE	Teacher turnover	6%	

Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	8
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	205
Number of joint lesson observations	5
Number of parents' questionnaires	340; (return rate: 7.8%)
Details of other inspection activities	Inspectors observed break periods, students' arrival and departure and assemblies. They met with school leaders, students, parents and teachers. Inspectors reviewed students' work, analysed performance data and reviewed documents provided by the school.

School	
School Aims	'To provide an excellent international education through its American and British programmes to meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students and inspire them to become life-long learners.'
School vision and mission	'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.'
Admission Policy	The school follows ADEC's admissions regulations. Parents register their interest online. Entry to the KG is by interview. Throughout the rest of the school admission is by entrance exam and interview.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	There is a governing body that provides managerial oversight. The school is led by a director and six phase leaders. Two other directors lead academic and educational affairs. The post of vice director is currently vacant.

SEN Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

SEN Category	Number of students identified through external assessments	Number of other students identified by the school
Intellectual disability	2	0
Specific Learning Disability	8	0
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	3	0
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	2	0
Speech and Language Disorders	2	0
Physical and health related disabilities	6	0
Visually impaired	2	0
Hearing impaired	1	0
Multiple disabilities	4	0

G&T Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	0
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	4
Social maturity and leadership	3
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	2
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	50
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	18

The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A	High performing (Outstanding, Very Good or Good)
Band B	Satisfactory (Acceptable)
Band C	In need of significant improvement (Weak or Very Weak)

School was judged to be:	BAND (B)	Acceptable
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	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
Performance Standards	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement						
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills						
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment						
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum						
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students						
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management						
Summary Evaluation: The school's overall performance						

The Performance of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall performance

The school's overall performance is acceptable. The school has responded well to the challenge of integrating several hundred new students from other local schools that have closed. Students can choose to follow British or American curriculum in most phases and attainment in both is, for the most part, improving. The school is promoting students' respect for Islamic values and their knowledge of the heritage and culture of the UAE very well. Students relate well to one another, their teachers and other adults and this results in a constructive learning environment. A number of strategies are being implemented to improve the school though the impact of these has not yet led to the decisive improvement the school is seeking. In particular, the school's use of attainment data to drive improvement planning and curriculum review, the impact of managers on improving the quality of teaching and the ways students learn, and the way teachers target work for groups and individuals, have all yet to be taken forward decisively. Around one third of students in Grades 10 to 12 were not present at the time of the inspection due to exam leave for external British curriculum examinations. Their past examination performance has been reviewed and included in this report where appropriate.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

The school has started to make improvements following its last inspection, though these are not yet having a decisive impact on outcomes for students. The attainment of the students who follow the American curriculum has improved recently but still fluctuates too much. Teachers are now adapting the work they provide to students. Teachers and managers are now held to account more for the progress students make. School leaders are determined to improve the school further and they have the capacity to do so. This capacity is likely to be increased as managers develop their expertise in leading change and when governors fill the vacant vice-director post.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school is beginning to promote innovation skills. For example, the environmental society leads projects to recycle waste. Students take part in competitions to design sustainable housing and solar powered cars. The school hosts an 'eco fair' for other schools and students use recycled materials to make, for example, innovative water filters. The school has been proactive in leading environmental sustainability including through harvesting rain. These are encouraging examples of how innovation is becoming integrated in students' learning.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- the attainment of students in their IGCSE courses
- students' appreciation of Islamic values and the respect they have for the heritage and culture of the UAE
- relationships students have with each other and with their teachers and other adults
- care, welfare and safeguarding arrangements
- the smooth running and day-to-day management of the school.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- the opportunities students have to be critical thinkers, problem solvers and innovators
- the use teachers make of attainment information to help them plan lessons that meet the different needs of students
- impact of middle leaders on raising the quality of teaching.



Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	N/A	Good	Good	Acceptable
	Progress	N/A	Good	Good	Acceptable
Social Studies	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	N/A
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	N/A
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Mathematics	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good	Good
Language of instruction (if other than English and Arabic as First Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The overall quality of students' achievement is acceptable. All groups of students achieve at least acceptable levels in coursework. In the KG and primary phases, attainment is in line with curriculum expectations in all subjects. In the middle and high phases, achievement has risen in both the British and American curricula. Most students' attainment in external examinations is now broadly in line with curriculum expectations. The school does not yet use the full range of external examination data from its American and British curricula to benchmark the standards being achieved, other than IGCSE in which grades were well above international averages in 2015. Results in A level and American courses tend to fluctuate but are broadly in line with international averages for these awards.

In Islamic education, achievement is acceptable in the primary and middle phases and good in the KG and high phases. Almost all KG children can recite 'Surah Al Fateha' and other small 'Surahs' from the Holy Qur'an accurately with appropriate respect, and the majority can explain the meaning of appropriate words and make links to their daily lives. By Grade 11, students enjoy learning how the Holy Qur'an is relevant to health and social issues in the UAE.

Achievement in Arabic is acceptable overall. First language Arabic students make acceptable progress in reading, comprehension and writing. For example in writing, Grade 1 students can write simple sentences, by Grade 5 short paragraphs, and by Grade 10, IGCSE students can write extended texts for different purposes. For the small number of students learning Arabic as a second language, achievement is good in the primary and middle phases. For example, almost all students in Grade 3 can read short paragraphs with the correct 'tashkeel' and can write short answers in sentences. By Grade 8, most can write their own sentences about, for example, healthy habits.

Students' achievement is acceptable in social studies in the KG and primary phases. For example, Grade 4 students can name the 7 Emirates and locate them on a map. Their achievement improves in the middle phase because they apply their learning to the history of the UAE. For example, Grade 7 students can use data from the present and past to investigate trends in the economic performance of the UAE.

In English, achievement is good for older students and acceptable for those in the KG and primary phases. In the KG, the majority can write simple sentences and recognise relevant digraphs. By Grade 11, in both curricula, almost all students are articulate English language speakers and can research, draft and present information for a variety of purposes. For example, in Grade 11 they can speak without notes about writers such as Percy Shelley and discuss his use of irony.



Students' attainment and progress in mathematics is acceptable in all phases. For example, in Grade 6 most students can use a calculator to work out the profit from a sale. By Grade 11, in the British curriculum, most students can use formulae and computers to present geometric sequences. Students following the American curriculum have fewer opportunities to apply their learning to solve complex mathematical problems and, as a result, they achieve less well.

Achievement in science improves as students get older. It is acceptable in the KG and primary phases and good further up the school. For example, in Grade 2 the majority of students can build a simple circuit to connect a battery, switch and bulb. In the middle and high phases, achievement improves because scientific learning is applied to real-life situations in both curricula. For example, Grade 9 students used their chemistry knowledge when making dough to create different kinds of pizza bases.

Students follow a wide range of different subjects in the high school. They achieve consistently high grades for most IGCSE subjects. In the KG, primary and middle phases, students' achievement is acceptable for information and communication technology (ICT), art, music and physical education (PE). The way these subjects are taught promotes a range of physical, practical, entrepreneurial and, at times, creative skills, as well as positive attitudes towards health, the environment and knowledge of the world.

Students collaborate with each other well and enjoy working in teams. Most can work together and on their own without teacher support. They are not yet developing strong creative, innovative, critical-thinking or ICT skills, and they need to develop better skills in initiating, planning and reviewing their own learning.

Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Overall, students' personal and social development is good. Students are courteous and display positive attitudes towards their work. Students and staff have positive relationships and this helps teaching and learning proceed without interruption in most classes. Occasionally, a few children in the KG and early years of the primary phase become unsettled when routines are not consistently followed. Students enjoy participating in activities that promote healthy lifestyles. Nearly all eat healthily at school and KG children are encouraged to wash their hands before and after they eat. Attendance is good at 95%. A few students arrive late regularly and miss assemblies.

Students have good knowledge of UAE culture and heritage. The school regularly celebrates and explains important national festivals in assemblies. Students respect the values of Islam. This is demonstrated by their tolerance and care for each other. During the annual international day, students make presentations about their home cultures, wear national dress and distribute traditional homemade foods. Students' understanding of the world is further supported by opportunities to take part in school trips to other countries such as Italy, Greece and France.

Students are aware of their responsibilities towards the environment and community. They contribute to Red Crescent campaigns. The environmental society organises desert and beach cleaning activities. Older girls take part in innovation competitions. The school recognises the need to expand these activities so that more students can take part and improve their innovation skills.

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

Teaching and Assessment Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Teaching for effective learning	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Assessment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The overall quality of teaching and assessment are acceptable. Teachers know their subjects generally well. They mostly plan lessons with clear objectives which help students understand what they are to learn. As a result of recent professional development, teachers now have a better understanding of how students learn. This is leading to improvements, particularly in the middle and high phases of the school. Most teachers are beginning to encourage students to develop their learning skills but have scope to do this much more. Teachers are also providing work that more accurately meets the needs and interests of students. For example, in Grade 11 British and American mathematics classes, students supported by teachers were leading the learning in lessons.

Teachers are now making innovative use of the resources available to them. A few use multi-media regularly to generate enthusiasm and link learning to the world. Teachers generally use question and answer sessions to engage students in lessons. A few teachers are now using techniques which lead to higher-order thinking, for example by asking questions which require students to plan longer and more complex answers. Students respond well to these challenges.

Teachers check on students' progress regularly. Students complete tests and teachers mark students' books. Only the minority of teachers provide helpful written feedback to students. Teachers provide appropriate support for students with special educational needs. The school uses an innovative programme to re-teach students who may have fallen behind. Teachers are not yet using the attainment and progress data they collect well enough to help them adapt lessons. As a result, higher-achieving students often receive work that is too easy and they are required to complete this before they can access more challenging work. Occasionally in the KG and primary phases, teachers do not follow consistent routines and this leads to classes becoming unsettled.

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Curriculum Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Curriculum adaptation	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

The curriculum is acceptable overall. It has a clear rationale to meet the diverse needs of individual students from a wide variety of nations and cultures. All children in the Kindergarten (KG) follow the British Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Around 90% of students follow the British curriculum in the primary and middle phases, and 10% follow the American curriculum. At the end of Grade 8, around 30% of students choose to study for the British Cambridge international examinations and 70% the American California and Georgia State ones. The British curriculum up to Grade 8 provides good progression into the British examinations, but less so into the American courses for those students who change to the American curriculum at the end of Grade 8. As a result, students attain less well in the American examinations though they meet American universities' entry requirements. The school has plans to look more closely at the progression routes through each of these curricula and to adapt them more effectively to improve the outcomes for students once the curricula diverge after Grade 8.

Teachers have modified the curriculum to enable better links to be made between subjects. For example, teachers use topics which integrate English, science and mathematics in the KG and early primary phases. Teachers across all phases are making links between learning and UAE culture. This represents an innovative start to curriculum adaptation. Further development of the curriculum is required to exploit the natural links that exist between subjects and ensure students' learning skills are developed more.

The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of trips, school clubs, competitions and conferences including, for example, sports, reading and robotics clubs. The school arranges visits to universities and colleges for older students.

Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
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Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Care and support	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable

Overall, arrangements for the protection, care, guidance and support of students are good. The school has clear, well-understood child protection procedures. Bullying is very rare and if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively. The school is clean and regular safety checks ensure the premises are well maintained. Records indicate that the school's procedures to ensure safety on school transport are appropriate and maintenance records are up to date.

Arrangements to ensure health, safety and security are effective. Procedures to monitor students' health are robust. The two clinics are well equipped and resourced. All medicines are stored safely. School trips are assessed for risk appropriately. The school buildings provide safe environments that are fit for purpose. The school has the capacity to ensure that, in the event that any students with mobility restrictions enrol, it will be able to adapt the accommodation to meet their needs. The middle and high phase building has lifts. Ramps provide access to most areas of the KG and primary phase.

The promotion of safe and healthy lifestyles is effective. The school canteen serves only healthy foods. Assemblies and PE lessons promote healthy exercise. Nearly all teachers apply the behaviour policy consistently. As a result, relationships between students, teachers and other adults are positive. Attendance has improved recently. In part, this is due to an effective campaign to encourage students to value their education. A few students are regularly late to assemblies. Students with SEN are identified accurately. SEN students are well supported by the three specialist teachers and their assistants. SEN students benefit from specialist facilities and they are also integrated into lessons. Students are well supported when they choose curricula options in Grade 9. In Grade 12, they are helped to make university and career choices.

Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Leadership and management Indicators	
The effectiveness of leadership	Acceptable
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Acceptable
Partnerships with parents and the community	Good
Governance	Acceptable
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

Overall, the leadership and management of the school is generally acceptable. School leaders set a clear direction that is in line with the values and priorities of the UAE. They have recently led professional development programmes about learning skills and self-evaluation to help improve the pace of improvement. As a result, the standard of teaching has improved, especially in English and science. Leaders demonstrate a real commitment to inclusion. For example, they have willingly accepted large numbers of new students into the school. Relationships are professional and all members of the leadership team are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Self-evaluation has improved since the last inspection and it now involves all members of staff. Development plans are now linked to the required improvements identified in the self-evaluation. The school has yet to review the structure of its complex curricula to improve progress and attainment for students whose curriculum choices diverge in the upper grades. Middle leaders are not having sufficient impact on improving learning and teaching or in helping teachers use important assessment information to plan learning.

The views of parents are now considered when school improvements are being planned. The recently formed parents' council now provides helpful guidance to school leaders. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. The school has developed innovative communication strategies which utilise a variety of media. Reporting is regular and parents can access the school's portal to gain detailed progress information. Links with local, national and international communities are improving. For example, the environment society leads local campaigns with other schools and the school hosts the model United Nations programme.

Governance is well organised and becoming more effective. The school's owner, parents and others provide expertise and support for the director. For example, they



have invested significantly in professional development and this is leading to improvements. They have ensured that the school is compliant with statutory and regulatory requirements. Overall, sufficient resources are available and the buildings are generally suitable. Leaders, managers and other suitably qualified adults ensure that this large school runs smoothly. Leaders at all levels know the improvements to be made and their capacity to improve the school is increasing.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve students' innovation and learning skills by ensuring that:
 - i. students have defined roles when they work in teams and they are given the opportunity to tackle large, complex tasks
 - ii. ICT is used more frequently to develop students' independence in learning
 - iii. students reflect more often on their own and others' work and plan how to make improvements
 - iv. creative and entrepreneurial activities are integrated more into lessons and the wider curriculum.
2. Improve the standard of teaching and the progress of students further by ensuring that:
 - i. teachers use benchmarked attainment data to identify individual students' strengths and areas for improvement
 - ii. lesson plans and resources are adapted more to meet students' individual learning needs, especially higher-achieving students
 - iii. middle leaders monitor and support teachers to enable them to make effective use of assessment data.
3. Improve the impact of leadership by ensuring that:
 - i. the vacant vice director's post is filled
 - ii. all leaders, including middle managers, review and improve the continuity and progression for students who choose the American curriculum
 - iii. benchmarked attainment data is used in self-evaluation and improvement planning processes.