



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



New School Inspection Report

Al Tharawat National Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

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Al Tharawat National Private School

Inspection Date	20 – 23 April, 2015
School ID#	254
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	568
Age Range	4 to 16 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Ahmed Mustafa Daraghmeh
School Address	Bani Yas, East 9, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 258 2533
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 582 2535
Official Email (ADEC)	Altharawat.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	altharawatschool.com
Date of opening	September 2014

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 7

The main strengths of the school are:

- students' developing understanding of UAE values and culture
- the positive relationships and effective communication with parents.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the need to urgently address all matters relating to security, health and safety
- the quality of provision in the Kindergarten (KG) so it is well matched to the needs of young children
- the quality of teaching and learning so that students make more rapid academic progress in all subjects
- the relevance and range of experiences offered by the curriculum so that students develop a broader range of academic and personal skills
- the range and quality of resources, particularly with regard to KG, classroom resources, computers and library books
- leadership at all levels to accurately evaluate the school, identify clear priorities, set measurable targets and monitor progress to rapidly raise academic standards.

Introduction

The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 64 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject coordinators, teachers, students, parents and the owner. They analysed available assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed the 190 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the schools policies and other documents. The principal and school administrator were involved throughout the inspection process. The lead inspector and principal conducted 1 joint lesson observation.

Description of the School

Al Tharawat National Private School is located in the Bani Yas area of Abu Dhabi. Previously a villa school in Mussafah, it opened in September 2014 as a new school in purpose-built accommodation and caters for students from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 9. The school's vision is: 'Our Children are Today's Hope and Tomorrow's Fortune'. Leadership has gone through a period of turbulence with a succession of 4 principals in the first two terms. The current principal was appointed in February 2015. The vice-principal has been absent on long-term sick leave since November 2014. Staff turnover is low. The owner of the school visits regularly.

There are 568, students, 53% are boys; 71 children in KG, 253 in the primary section (grades 1 – 5) and 244 in secondary (grades 6 – 9). Students from KG – Grade 5 are taught in mixed classes and from Grade 6 upwards they are taught in separate classes for boys and girls. Almost all students are Muslim and of Arab heritage: 4% are Emirati, 35% Syrian, 14% Yemeni, 9% Jordanian, 9% Egyptian, 8% Sudanese, 7% Somali and 4% Palestinian. A further 14 nationalities are represented in the school making up 6.5% of the school population. There are 8 students identified with special educational needs (SEN): 2 with physical disabilities and 6 with autism. Almost all students are fluent in the main language of teaching, which is Arabic. The admissions policy is inclusive, in line with ADEC guidelines. No external tests have yet been undertaken.

Fees range from AED 9,000 to AED 11,000 per year and include books, uniform and transport. These are in the low category.

The Effectiveness of the School

Al Tharawat National Private School is in need of significant improvement as it provides a very unsatisfactory standard of education. All aspects of the school are very unsatisfactory except for students' personal development, which is unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention is given to security and matters related to health and safety. Senior leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the areas for improvement and the recently constituted Board of Trustees is ineffective.

Attitudes to learning are satisfactory, particularly for girls. Behaviour is improving but remains unsatisfactory overall. Attainment is below national and international standards in all subjects. The largely didactic teaching approach fails to engage and motivate students. The values, culture and heritage of the UAE are reasonably well integrated across the curriculum. There are no extra-curricular activities available to enrich learning experiences for students. The range and quality of resources and facilities are inadequate and do not sufficiently support the delivery of the curriculum.

Students' attainment & progress

Evidence from lesson observation and scrutiny of students' work indicates that attainment and progress in all grades are unsatisfactory. They are below curriculum and well below international expectations. Standards in Arabic and Islamic education are unsatisfactory; in social studies, mathematics, science, English and information and communication technology (ICT) they are very unsatisfactory. The attainment and progress of students in other curriculum areas, such as art and physical education (PE), is unsatisfactory. This is in part due to a lack of resources to support these areas. Students with SENs and the more able make poor progress, as there is insufficient recognition or provision for their specific needs.

Children who start school in KG do not always speak standard Arabic and their speaking skills are generally below age-related expectations. Few children have any experience of English prior to coming to school. They make slow progress in all areas of learning including communication and literacy skills, numeracy, creativity and thinking skills. By the time they leave KG both attainment and progress are below age-related expectations.

In Islamic education, students acquire basic levels of knowledge; their understanding of the links between learning and their everyday lives is limited. By Grade 9, recitation of the Holy Qur'an is of unsatisfactory standard and intonation is weak. In Arabic, students' listening skills are satisfactory but speaking skills vary

and many struggle to express their thoughts in standard Arabic. Writing skills and grammar remain below age-related expectations and students in upper grades have too few opportunities to produce extended writing. Reading is not promoted well enough in the lower grades, and in the higher grades reading comprehension is unsatisfactory. Students do not develop the expected knowledge in social studies. Too often information is simply memorized and students cannot link what they learn to their own experience and daily lives. Knowledge about the UAE, its values and culture are broadly satisfactory.

In mathematics, students develop calculation skills slowly and their overall mathematical competence is below curriculum expectations. There is insufficient emphasis on the acquisition of mental mathematical skills leading to an over reliance on calculators. There are too few opportunities for students to solve problems and engage in practical activities. Transferring mathematical knowledge to other curriculum areas, such as science, is weak. Students' scientific knowledge is below curriculum expectations. In primary grades, they develop some basic scientific skills. Investigative skills and the ability to carry out experiments are underdeveloped in the secondary phase.

Few students have experience of using English outside school. For the majority, standards are well below the age related expectations for students who are learning English as an additional language. Most students do not speak English with confidence and their vocabulary is limited. By Grade 9, writing is mostly at sentence level; punctuation and spelling are not always accurate. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the school are at an early stage of development. Students are starting to become familiar with a range of software applications.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is unsatisfactory. Most students are courteous, respectful of each other and their teachers and welcome visitors. Relationships between teachers and students are improving and are based on growing mutual respect.

Behaviour is unsatisfactory overall. Children in KG become restless when they are expected to listen for too long and learning is not well suited to their age. Younger primary students often take longer to settle in their lessons and frequently find it hard to concentrate. This slows down their learning. Some older boys do not demonstrate self-discipline. Students say there is little or no bullying. Attendance at 97% is well above average and students are punctual at the start of the day and for their lessons. They show respect for the values and culture of the UAE. The school fulfils its obligations by raising the UAE flag at assembly every

morning and students sing the national anthem. Students demonstrate age appropriate moral viewpoints.

The development of skills and the personal attributes students need for the world of work or further education, is very unsatisfactory. Separate school councils for boys and girls have very recently been established. Students lead and contribute to assemblies. There are few other opportunities to develop leadership skills. The school does not offer a programme of clubs or activities so there are too few opportunities for students to develop their social and personal skills. Their practical understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives is limited.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very unsatisfactory. More than two thirds of lessons were judged to be very unsatisfactory or poor. About a fifth of teaching was deemed satisfactory, which was mainly in Islamic education.

Too often learning objectives are not specific, lessons are not planned and timed carefully enough and teaching methods are limited and resources inadequate. Frequently teachers talk too much, restricting learning to the acquisition of knowledge at the expense of the development of necessary skills. Not all language teachers model English to a high enough standard. Teachers in KG and the lower grades do not have sufficient understanding of how young children learn and so teaching strategies are inappropriate and ineffective. Classroom assistants in the KG are not used effectively to support either the teacher or students' learning.

Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. In the more effective lessons, the learning objectives develop students' skills alongside the acquisition of knowledge. In these lessons, there is a better balance between teaching input and student activity and this helps to motivate and engage students. A steady pace of delivery and timed learning activities help to keep students focused.

In most lessons adequate behaviour management ensures that learning is not interrupted. Most teachers have warm relationships with students. A few teachers who own laptops are beginning to take advantage of the available data projectors. Some teachers are starting to provide learning activities, but too often activities occupy students without promoting sufficient learning. Some collaborative learning is offered; the tasks are not always appropriate for the size of the group. This results in some students being passive observers rather than active and productive participants. Teachers provide few opportunities for discussion, for students to think for themselves or learn independently.

Teachers monitor attainment mainly through the administration of short tests. Information gathered from these assessments is not used to inform lesson planning and support the needs of individual students. The quality of marking in students' books is unsatisfactory. There are few comments made by teachers that could help students to improve their work.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

Students' needs are not adequately met through the implementation of the curriculum. Weaknesses in curriculum delivery are a key reason why many students' engagement, learning skills and personal development are unsatisfactory and the progress they make in lessons very unsatisfactory. The curriculum adequately develops understanding of UAE culture and values through social studies lessons, assemblies, social studies and participation in national celebrations.

Across all phases curriculum delivery lacks challenge and does not promote creativity, thinking or problem-solving. The curriculum has not been sufficiently adjusted to make it relevant to students' everyday lives and does not interest or engage students sufficiently. There are not enough opportunities to develop independence, collaboration, research, problem solving skills and personal qualities. The learning needs of students, especially those identified with special educational needs and the more able, are not met well enough to enable them to make adequate progress. There are insufficient extra-curricular activities, competitions, sporting events and other enrichment activities. Students are not adequately prepared for their future lives.

The implementation of the KG curriculum is poor with few opportunities for child initiated learning and gross motor skill development. Curriculum delivery does not enable students to make adequate progress. It does not reflect understanding of the learning needs of young children, there is insufficient activity-based learning and no opportunities for free flow activities.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students is very unsatisfactory. There are serious security, health and safety issues that need to be urgently addressed. Not all fire doors have push bars on them. If unlocked, access can be gained from outside. If locked they cannot be used in an emergency. There is no perimeter fence or wall surrounding the school, so students exiting from the school on 3 sides of the building go straight onto the street and surrounding roads. People from outside of the school can access the school premises through these doors unchecked. There is only 1 full-time security guard. The medical history for the vast majority of students is not known, putting them at risk in the

event of an emergency. The clinic is basic and not fully equipped or adequately resourced. Parts of the building are unfinished and unsafe. The school is not vigilant enough in identifying potential safety issues and does not take rapid action to resolve issues when they are apparent.

A child protection policy outlines clear procedures and these are known to both teachers and students. Students feel cared for by their teachers and other staff. When there are incidents of bullying or other forms of intimidation these are swiftly resolved. There are suitable prayer facilities. The school follows the expected procedures for the recruitment of staff.

Students' academic and personal development is not tracked adequately. Some students have been identified with SENs; the support for them is inadequate. Students do not receive enough advice to help them make informed decisions about the next stages of their education or sufficient help to prepare them for future careers.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school buildings and premises are very unsatisfactory. The premises are large, classrooms are adequate in size, the environment is light and well ventilated. Specialist teaching areas have been identified, although not all are fully functioning, for example, the library and science laboratory. Some basic displays in the classrooms and shared areas help to make the school attractive. There are ramps, lifts and toilets suitable for use by students with physical disabilities.

The newly constructed school has not been finished; electrical wiring is not secured with fascia plates; there are potential trip hazards and not all snags have been attended to. The soft surfacing in the courtyard was laid on an uneven surface, is not fit for purpose and presents a hazard to students during break times and PE lessons. The tables and chairs in grade 1 classrooms are too small and not fit for purpose. There is not enough furniture in the canteen to meet demand. There are no blinds on classroom windows. Classrooms, corridors and toilets are not always clean or hygienic.

The school's resources to support its aims

The provision of resources is very unsatisfactory in all grades and does not adequately support curriculum delivery. There are not enough resources in the classrooms to support the effective delivery of the curriculum. In KG classrooms, there are insufficient resources to support free or structured play, investigation or reading activities. Only the administration area of the school has internet access. There are some staff shortages including: an acting vice-principal, librarian and lab technician.

Data projectors have been installed in almost all classrooms. The ICT room does not have sufficient workstations for the larger classes and students do not have access to a computer each. School has put in place suitable procedures to ensure that transport is fit for purpose and safety requirements are maintained. The school site is fitted with CCTV cameras.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are very unsatisfactory. There has been no stability in leadership with 4 principals appointed within the space of 8 months. The current principal took up post in February 2015. The vice-principal is on long-term sick leave. The leadership lacks the knowledge and experience to set up a new school. Senior leaders have not demonstrated the ability to identify security, health and safety issues nor the capacity to rectify issues swiftly. The owner of the school and a recently established board of trustees do not hold the school sufficiently to account for the quality of education.

Poor student behaviour was appropriately prioritized and has been improved considerably. Basic systems and procedures have been set up to help with the day-to-day management of the school. Essential policies including those for child protection and behaviour have been produced and shared with staff and students.

Self-evaluation is overly generous and not supported by evidence. Improvement planning identifies appropriate aspects but targets are not measurable, progress is not tracked and since the start of the academic year, few targets have been achieved. Subject coordinators have been identified. They hold departmental meetings and share suggestions for lessons. They have received no training and do not have any release time from full teaching commitments in order to carry out their duties effectively.

Continual professional development is limited and the impact of it is not consistent. Training for staff is not sufficiently aligned to school priorities and the impact on raising standards is not monitored well enough. School leaders observe lessons but visits are infrequent, do not focus sufficiently on the quality of learning and students rates of progress and consequently judgements are too generous. There is a lack of understanding of what good quality teaching and learning involves.

Parents are supportive; the vast majority who responded to the questionnaire are positive and pleased that their children attend the school. A Parent Council has recently been set up, though parents are not currently involved in decision-making. There are appropriate procedures in place for dealing with their complaints.

Capacity for further development

The school has not demonstrated it has sufficient capacity to make improvements as little progress has been made in raising standards since the beginning of the school year. The lack of consistency in the leadership has been a major contributory factor. There are significant, urgent matters of health and safety that are not being attended to in a timely manner. The Board of Trustees does not undertake its responsibilities effectively.

The school will require significant and sustained external support if the quality of education is to rapidly improve.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Urgently attend to all security, health and safety matters specified in this report and improve health and safety monitoring procedures.
2. Improve teaching and learning so that a greater proportion of lessons secure at least satisfactory progress:
 - a) in KG by:
 - i. providing teachers with further training and opportunities to observe good practice in other schools
 - ii. broadening the variety of learning activities so that children develop a wider range of skills
 - iii. developing the skills of teaching assistants to effectively support student learning
 - b) at whole school level, particularly for SEN and the more able, by:
 - i. ensuring that teachers consistently use clearly defined learning objectives that focus on developing students' skills and understanding as well as their knowledge
 - ii. linking learning to real-life practical applications to ensure that it is relevant
 - iii. increasing the pace of lessons and setting time limits for activities
 - iv. developing teachers' use of data to plan lessons and track student progress
 - v. increasing the range of teaching strategies, to ensure students are active and develop thinking, investigative and creative skills
 - vi. ensuring that students' work is marked frequently and they understand how to improve their work.

3. Improve the facilities and resources by:
 - i. increasing the range and quality of classroom resources, particularly in KG
 - ii. increase the range and quality of facilities to ensure that all students have access to a quality education in sports science and ICT in all sections of the school
 - iii. improve the library resources in order to provide sufficient reading materials and computer access to enhance the development of literacy and research skills.
4. Strengthen implementation of the curriculum by:
 - i. providing regular opportunities for students to develop 21st century skills, particularly higher order thinking, collaboration and independence
 - ii. enriching the curriculum through a range of social and cultural scientific sporting activities and events.
5. Improve leadership and management in order to raise standards by:
 - i. ensuring that the monitoring of lessons is focused on what students learn and the progress they make
 - ii. concentrating in lesson observations on the effectiveness of learning and linking professional development to the identified outcomes
 - iii. developing the roles of middle leaders to increase their impact on the quality of teaching and rates of academic progress
 - iv. developing the accuracy of self-evaluation to help the school identify key priorities for improvement.

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								