



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



New School Inspection Report

Al Yasat Private School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

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Al Yasat Private School

Inspection Date	4 – 6 May 2015
School ID#	244
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	227
Age Range	4 to 12 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Lesley Isherwood
School Address	P.O. Box 25586, Al Shamkha, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 641 2300
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 641 1050
Official Email (ADEC)	Alyasat.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.alyasat-school.com
Date of opening	22 October 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 B;	GRADE 4
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The main strengths of the school are:

- securely satisfactory academic achievement across almost all subjects
- the quality of the building and resources enhances effective delivery of the curriculum
- the care and support provided for those students with special educational needs promotes academic progress in line with their peers
- a strong positive ethos where students are well cared for and say they feel safe and secure
- a strongly integrated leadership team sharing a common vision for high standards and sustained growth
- the culture and traditions of the UAE celebrated across the school
- a focused language development programme that is promoting progress in literacy.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the academic progress of more able students
 - the engagement of students as active learners in classrooms
 - the development of 21st century skills through independent thinking, research, experimentation, and reporting.
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by a team of 3 inspectors. They observed 45 lessons and conducted several meetings with senior staff, the proprietor, students, parents, subject coordinators, health and safety supervisors, teachers and the school's accountant. They analysed students' performance data, scrutinized samples of students' work in all subject areas, analysed 67 responses to the parents' questionnaire about the school and reviewed the school's policies and other documents. The senior leadership team was involved throughout the process and conducted 3 joint lesson observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

Al Yasat Private School opened on October 22, 2014 in a new school building in the Al Shamkha region of Abu Dhabi. The mission of Al Yasat Private School is to 'provide a safe, nurturing, educational environment that will enable students to become lifelong learners'. Al Yasat accepts all students who apply. KG and Grade 1 students are interviewed for school readiness and new students in Grades 2-6 are administered a Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) test to establish a baseline score that will be used to determine progress.

There are 227 students enrolled; 56% are boys, almost all are Muslim and of Arabic heritage. There are 21 nationalities represented at the school, of which the majority are Emirati nationals at 73%; the other main groups of students are Egyptians (6%), Sudanese (4%), Pakistani and Jordanians (3%) each, Indian (2%), with the remainder being less than 1% representations. There are 67 children enrolled in the KG programme, 140 students in Grade 1 to Grade 5, and 20 students in Grade 6. The school has identified 52 students as having special educational needs (SEN); 7 of these students have an external diagnostic report that has resulted in the development of individualized education plans (IEPs). The school awaits results of a further 10 referrals for an external review to identify their needs. The school has not identified any gifted or talented students.

School governance is provided by a Board of Governors. A principal, 2 vice-principals, and a Curriculum Coordinator comprise the senior leadership team, along with coordinators in major subject areas.

Fees at Al Yasat range are AED 30,000 for KG, AED 33,000 in Grades 1-3 and AED 36,500 in Grades 4-6. These fees are in the premium category.

The Effectiveness of the School

Al Yasat provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education. Senior leaders, proprietors and governors have secured an impressively consistent quality of education across all performance standards in the relatively short time the school has been operational. This is attributable to a genuinely shared vision, and an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

Students are making at least satisfactory academic progress across all subjects from relatively low starting points. This is because assessment is used well to plan lessons that effectively meet individual needs. In particular, the school provides good support for those students with SEN. Provision and planning for the more able is less well developed. High quality resources and an attractive learning environment support the effective delivery of the curriculum. The school is well placed to tackle the areas for improvement identified by this report, and successfully meet the challenges of expanding the school roll in the coming years.

Students' attainment & progress

Students' attainment and progress is satisfactory and improving. Academic achievement is consistently satisfactory and improving across all subject areas with the exception of information and communications technology (ICT) where it is satisfactory. Students' basic skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and thinking are satisfactory and improving. The development of ICT skills is inconsistent across the curriculum; students make satisfactory progress from low starting points in ICT. Students with SEN make similar progress to their peers due to the effective support and monitoring they receive; the more able make satisfactory progress.

Standards at the start of the school year were below international levels as measured by MAP standardized baseline tests. The MAP test for students in Grade 1 to Grade 6 has been administered twice, once in October 2014 and again in March 2015. Subsequent MAP data shows good gains in all subjects and grades. MAP data indicates that Al Yasat students perform below international standards but show more than satisfactory progress over time, with the attainment gap reducing. MAP data is used to inform lesson planning and identify individual student's learning needs. Evidence from lesson observations, discussions with students and a scrutiny of work supports this judgment. In almost all lessons, teachers successfully target age-appropriate Common Core Standards with most students demonstrating an understanding of the concepts.

Most students enter the KG with very little exposure to English. They make rapid progress in developing communication and literacy skills. All KG1 children know their letters and sounds and can phonetically sound out simple words. They are beginning to develop their thinking and creativity. In mathematics, children develop satisfactory number skills, in KG they can count to 100 and recognize numbers in numeral form. In science, children in KG can classify matter as solid or liquid, but are unable to describe the properties of different types of matter.

Students make satisfactory and improving progress in English language. This is due to an innovative programme for targeting the acceleration of the development of English language skills. They rapidly gain confidence, from low starting points, in using English to access the curriculum. They develop a range of effective strategies and skills: in Grade 1 they illustrate motion by physically acting out the words, in Grade 2 they can create compounds from 2 separate words and by Grade 6 can confidently compare and contrast characters in different stories.

In Arabic, standards are in line with curriculum expectations and progress is satisfactory and improving. Students have good listening skills and adequate speaking and reading abilities. They use standard Arabic and read with clear expression. Writing is below age-related expectations, as students do not have sufficient opportunity to compose extended pieces, and often make basic grammatical errors. In Islamic education, attainment and progress are satisfactory and improving. Most students have secure understanding of the required knowledge regarding the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and Islamic concepts. Their ability to accurately recite the Holy Qur'an is less well developed. In social studies, students acquire the expected skills and understanding related to the history, geography and economy of the Middle East.

In both mathematics and science, students make satisfactory and improving progress. By Grade 2, they confidently undertake mental calculations and by Grade 6 most can simplify, add, and subtract fractions. In science, students gain good subject knowledge in all grades. Students do not have enough opportunities to build on this knowledge to extend their learning through exploration and discovery. This is common across the school and is a key reason why the development of 21st century skills across the curriculum is only satisfactory.

There are effective systems for assessing the progress that students make. Most teachers use this information to effectively target provision for students. Assessment is very well used in the development of English language skills in all grades. The monitoring and support for SEN students is good. There is limited use of self or peer assessment.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is good in almost every aspect. Students show a consistently positive attitude towards school life. They are proud of their new school and demonstrate this through good behaviour and engagement in lessons. They socialize well in small groups before school as well as during break time. They are aware of the school's values and have a clear sense of what is right, and what is wrong.

Students have a good knowledge of the UAE culture, traditions, heritage and values. They show appreciation for the culture of others. They use Islamic principles to guide their moral judgements. Selected students have roles in assemblies with speaking and singing responsibilities. They are active in after school activities such as sporting, cultural and service activities. The student council plays a very active role in the school; they provide input into many programmes, activities, and processes. Outside of the student council, there are a satisfactory range of opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and attributes.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. The quality of lessons observed by inspectors ranged from good to very unsatisfactory; only a small minority were deemed less than satisfactory and a significant minority were judged to be good. The most effective lessons were in English and mathematics; less effective teaching was mainly seen in science and ICT. Most teachers display effective management strategies and routines. Most teaching assistants are used effectively to support learning.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge in all areas and ensure that learning is accurate. Lessons are planned thoroughly and most teachers share the lesson objectives with students so that learning expectations are clear. There is sufficient variety in most lessons to provide interest and motivation. Students' engagement with learning is high during most lessons. They make better than satisfactory progress in the majority of lessons. In a minority of lessons, too much teacher talk slows progress. There is some inconsistency in matching the learning activities to the identified needs of students. The progress of the most able learners is slowed by this lack of rigour.

When given the opportunity, students learn well collaboratively and independently. In a few lessons, student led learning creates exciting opportunities to solve problems, work together, and use their own ideas to formulate outcomes. In others, there are limited opportunities for them to

develop inquiry since teachers dominate with a step-by step approach to knowledge acquisition.

Meeting students' need through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is satisfactory and improving. The curriculum offer is broad and balanced with additional opportunities that include music, art, drama, and physical education (PE) to enrich the learning experience. The curriculum effectively motivates students and promotes their academic achievement

The MoE curriculum planning and delivery provides structure and support for those subjects instructed in Arabic. The KG, is a locally developed curriculum which uses the best international practice and pedagogy suitable for early years as the formative base. It has a strong focus upon the development of speaking, reading, and writing in English; as well as a strong numeracy focus. Within a 'play and learn' format, students grow to be well-behaved and good classroom citizens. They learn respect for themselves, the teacher and their classmates. The KG curriculum promotes the refinement of gross and fine motor skills through the effective use of multi-sensory resources.

The US Common Core Curriculum provides a high level of challenge in English and mathematics resulting in outcomes that are approaching international standards. Science in Grades 1 through 6, relies upon the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) standards to provide structure in lesson planning and to identify the expected student outcomes. NGSS promotes hands on experiences in measurement, data, collection, and the use of scientific method when problem solving.

Students gain a good understanding and respect for the values of the UAE and respect for other cultures through assemblies, plays, and celebrations throughout the year. This is reinforced by effective cross-curricular links. Approximately half of the students are involved in a wide range of after school activities such as sporting, service, and volunteer options. The school has satisfactory links with external partners.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students is satisfactory and improving. There is a strong positive ethos focused upon the growth of each student academically, emotionally and morally. Staff understand their responsibility to keep students safe and demonstrate this through supervision at all times including during breaks and in hallways. The school has effective

procedures to monitor students' academic and personal development. The care provided for students with SEN is good.

The school maintains a central register and makes all necessary checks on adults who work in the school. There is a clear behaviour policy and bullying is absolutely forbidden, students report that it is dealt with effectively by staff. There is a child protection policy in place and adults know their roles and responsibilities if any concerns should arise. Attendance is average at 92%. The school follows up on absences rigorously. There is a procedure in place to improve punctuality.

The clinic is fit for purpose and the nurse is suitably qualified. All medicines, as well as students' health records, are securely stored. The 2 prayer rooms are of adequate size for the number of students, and they are encouraged to use them. Appropriate procedures for the evacuation of the school in case of emergency are in place. School records show that these drills are practised regularly.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The quality of the school's buildings and premises is good. The buildings and playgrounds are of sufficient size. Classrooms are spacious, well lit and well ventilated. They are maintained to high standards and are safe and hygienic. There is a named health and safety officer and all relevant policies and practices are in order.

The campus is kept safe and secure by security officers who are vigilant in protecting the students. Curriculum support is provided through the provision of a swimming pool, an air conditioned multi-purpose gym, libraries, ICT and science laboratories. The KG area of the school is located on the ground floor and is especially well-designed to support the 'learn while playing' focus. The school buildings are suitably adapted to support the academic and physical requirements of SEN students to access the curriculum.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resources are good. There has been significant investment in resources to give more than adequate support for teachers in the delivery of the curriculum. There is an experienced and well-qualified teaching force. There is an impressive range of resources in supporting learning in KG, including big play equipment, water park, indoor and outdoor play areas, a teaching kitchen, and a wide range of books and manipulatives.

The spacious libraries are well designed and equipped to create areas where whole class activities can take place and other areas where students can relax and read. There are 6 computers located in each library to allow students to

undertake research projects. There is a wide range of fiction, non-fiction, and research books. The quantity and quality of Arabic books is limited.

The school has a wide range of technology to support the development of the students' ICT skills. There are 2 computer laboratories with enough computers for each student to work independently. All classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards and iPads on trolleys are available. The swimming pool, sports hall, and other covered outdoor areas provide good facilities for PE. Resources in art and music are more than adequate to support delivery of the curriculum. School's procedures to ensure that transport is well maintained and meets all safety requirements, are appropriate.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management is satisfactory and improving. The senior leadership team, proprietors and governors, share a common vision for high standards and sustained improvement. The proprietor and governing body have a suitably objective view of the quality of education and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Senior leaders are very visible in the school and they know the names and families of every student. Staff, students and parents, have an active role in school evaluation and strategic planning. There is great cohesion amongst the leadership team. It is clear that they have a shared purpose and vision, but each has their own goals and is held accountable for them.

The school's self-evaluation (SEF) is detailed and the judgments are highly accurate. The leadership team are aware of their strengths as well as the areas that require improvement. The school development plan (SDP) clearly articulates strategic priorities, the steps required to achieve them and suitable monitoring and evaluation processes. This clearly demonstrates that senior leaders have the insight, resource and determination to move forward.

Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the quality of care it provides so that their children feel safe and happy in school. There are effective procedures for dealing with any concerns or complaints they may have.

Capacity for further development

The 2015-2016 school year holds many challenges for Al Yasat Private School as it adds grades 7, 8, and 9. Senior leaders and governors are planning for a large influx of students. The school development plan contains clearly articulated targets and timelines necessary to be met in terms of accommodation, staffing, curriculum, and transportation. The first steps have been completed. There is a new high school principal and vice-principal already under contract. The entire teaching staff required for September 2015 is in place and contracted. The school

has successfully recruited a competent, qualified staff and are now developing curriculum and marshalling resources.

Senior leaders have clearly demonstrated the good capacity to sustain the current level of education and secure further improvements to it.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve teaching and learning in all subject areas, particularly for the more able, by:
 - i. analysing assessment data to improve targeted differentiation that matches the students' needs
 - ii. increasing the students' engagement as active learners in lessons
 - iii. improving the development of 21st century skills through independent thinking, research, experimentation, and reporting.
2. Provide professional development to assist teachers in planning lessons that require the students to use instructional technology to research information, conduct experimentation, and present their conclusions.

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								