



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



New School Inspection Report

Aliaa International Private School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

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Aliaa International Private School

Inspection Date	21 – 24 April 2014
School ID#	235
Licensed Curriculum	American
Number of Students	594
Age Range	3 to 12 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	H. Fatih Adak
School Address	Al Daher/Mezyed - Al Ain
Telephone Number	+971 (0)3 784 8992
Fax Number	+971 (0)3 780 9080
Official Email (ADEC)	Aliaaint.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	Aliaaintschool.com
Date of opening	September 2013

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 6
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the school has a positive ethos, and a shared clarity of vision and purpose
- it is a safe, secure, clean and spacious learning environment
- it has effective structures, systems, policies, procedures and routines in place, supported by detailed and helpful information
- the principal has the confidence and support of students, staff and parents
- relationships between teachers and students and among students are positive, and they treat each other with respect.

The main areas for improvement are:

- standards and progress in all subjects
- the quality of teaching and learning
- resources in classrooms and the library
- provision for the different needs of all students including special educational needs (SEN) and gifted and talented
- the roles and responsibilities of school board members, the chair of governors and the proprietor.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 64 lessons, break periods, students' arrival and departure, and attended assemblies. They conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject coordinators, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test results and examined students' work across the school. They considered the 183 responses to the parents' questionnaire and many of the school's policies and other documents. In addition they met with the proprietor and the chair of governors. The principal was involved throughout the inspection process and completed a joint lesson observation with the lead inspector.

Description of the School

Aliaa International Private School is a new school in Al Daher, Al Ain, and serves the area of greater Mezyad. It opened in September 2013 in a new building. The majority of students are from the local area. The aims of the school are 'to enable each student to achieve their potential within a learning environment that is safe, positive, respectful and inclusive and welcoming... We aim to nurture a passion for knowledge, sport, creativity and vocational skills.'

There are 594 students on roll. There are 240 children in kindergarten (KG), 132 boys and 108 girls. In the primary school there are 291 students, 209 boys and 82 girls, and 63 students in the middle school, with 55 boys and 8 girls. Overall the school has twice as many boys as girls: 396 boys and 198 girls. 99.7% of students are Muslim. The large majority of students (88.5%) are Emirati. The remaining students are from Oman (6%), Syria (1.4%), Egypt (1%), and Jordan (1%) and smaller proportion from other countries. There are no students recorded as having special educational needs. The school recognises that 60-70% of students are academically weak in English language skills.

The school is owned by the Al Khaja Holding Group. The governing body is not yet fully operative. The school is supported by an ADEC School Development Partner.

Fees charged for KG are AED 10,000, primary AED 12,000, middle school AED 14,000 and AED 18,000 for high school. These fall into the low to medium category range. The school has a total of 47 qualified teachers and have been approved by ADEC. It has 20 classroom/ learning assistants, 14 administrators, 2 security staff, 2 care staff and 7 others. The social worker recently resigned. There is a Mothers' Council and a students' council.

The Effectiveness of the School

While this report recognises the strengths and especially the leadership and management's satisfactory capacity to lead school development, the school cannot be judged satisfactory overall as students' attainment and progress and teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. (Refer to page Irtiqa'a Framework, 'Limiting Judgements' page 15.)

Students' attainment & progress

The school undertakes no external standardised tests and has not yet established procedures for measuring its performance against either similar schools or international standards. It has requested permission from ADEC to introduce Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) tests for English, mathematics and science.

The school has no prior attainment records for students. It conducts screening and diagnostic tests on entry for children in KG. Children's performance in KG is assessed monthly by teachers to track their progress. Results are recorded on the School Management/Information System (SMS/SIS). There are end of term tests for all students in grades 3 to 7. These results are reported to parents via report cards and at parent/teacher meetings.

Attainment in KG is at the expected level for children of this age. Children in KG are making appropriate progress. Children in KG account for over a third of the school population. These children have secured a firm foundation for their future achievement in this school.

In grades 1 to 7 attainment in all core subjects is well below international standards in all subjects. Grade descriptors published for the Common Core Standards of the California State curriculum framework are not used effectively to measure student performance. In the short time the school has been open, students have made expected progress in Islamic education, Arabic, English and science. Progress in mathematics, social studies and information and communication technology (ICT) is less strong.

In all subjects students are given insufficient opportunities to develop higher order thinking and problem solving skills.

Students' personal development

The school has a positive ethos. It rigorously monitors and follows up absences. As a result attendance is at 97%. Punctuality is not as effectively tackled by the school.

Students say they enjoy school and feel safe. They have positive attitudes to learning. They understand how to live safe and healthy lives. Behaviour around

the school and in classrooms is polite, sensible and respectful. Students work well together. They take the opportunity to be involved in the school and community activities. A range of clubs for Arabic, English and mathematics, and a school council contribute to their personal development. The school is effective in developing students' knowledge and appreciation of the heritage and values of the UAE.

The majority of students have limited social confidence. Most have weak English language skills which inhibits active social interactions. Students' success in recent competitions, such as first prize in the Sheikh Hamdan educational competition, is helping to build their confidence and pride in their school.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Relationships in classrooms between teacher and students, and among students, are positive and respectful. Classroom management is effective. Weekly professional development sessions, provided by the school for all teachers, are having some impact in classrooms. For example, in all lessons observed, teachers shared clear learning objectives with students. They do not always use these to review understanding later in the lesson. Students work well together in groups.

Teachers in KG provide a wide range of engaging activities. Activities are matched to children's different learning needs. Lessons challenge the more able children and support the less able ones. There are some appropriate opportunities for critical thinking and problem solving. These are not consistent features of teaching in other parts of the school, especially where there is too much teacher talk time and students learn passively.

Throughout the school there is extensive use of group work and collaborative learning. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards. In contrast, students' use of ICT in classrooms is limited.

In primary and middle grades, teacher assessment data is not being used to plan lessons to meet students' individual needs, or track students' progress. Teachers' marking does not tell students how to improve, or set them targets. The use of support assistants in classrooms is not consistently effective.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The school opened this year using the Common Core standards, State of California, USA. The KG curriculum is based on the Early Years development curriculum. It encourages active, creative, social and physical learning through play. It integrates the skills of core subjects with a thematic curriculum. In grades 1 to 7, in addition to the core subjects, students are taught physical education (PE),

art, music and French. The curriculum has adequate breadth and balance. It provides opportunities for students to understand and appreciate UAE history and culture. Timetabling is efficient.

The school has established a range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, special events days and field trips to enrich and support the curriculum. All the children in KG2 visited the science museum during the week of the inspection. Photographs from the visit were used the same day to engage the children in classroom learning.

Curriculum planning does not always address the learning needs of students with additional needs, including gifted and talented students, those with special educational needs and students with weaker English language skills. There are few opportunities for the development of 21st century skills such as creative and critical thinking.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school is a safe, secure and caring learning environment. All the necessary safeguards have been taken by the school to ensure students' safety. The necessary structures, systems, policies, and procedures to keep students safe are in place. There is detailed documentation for staff, parents and students. All staff have had training on child protection procedures. They know what to do in cases of suspected or actual abuse. Designated staff have clear responsibilities for security and health and safety. The civil defence, school transport and other agencies have undertaken training with both staff and students. During the inspection the fire alarm activated, due to smoke detectors in a KG2 classroom. Inspectors witnessed a calm, orderly and efficient evacuation of the whole school in less than 3 minutes. Everyone knew what to do. Parents say their children feel safe. There is a well-equipped clinic with a full time licensed nurse. There are 3 prayer rooms, one for KG, one for boys and one for girls. Students are encouraged to use them.

The recent resignation of the social worker highlights the need for a more coherent pastoral structure to track and support students' development, both academic and pastoral. There is no designated special needs coordinator.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings are at present fit for purpose. They are light and modern, spacious and well ventilated. The health and safety committee ensures they are hygienic and well maintained. Security cameras, guards and clear systems and procedures ensure the school is safe and secure.

Displays are not of a consistently high quality. In KG and some primary classrooms there are attractive and stimulating displays which support and enrich learning. In some higher grade classrooms displays are poor. There is only one classroom for both art and music. There is no gymnasium. Facilities for PE are limited. Most specialist facilities are situated on the second floor and there are no lifts. As the school expands, the current building will become inadequate. It cannot cater for increased student numbers, for a higher school curriculum, or for students with physical disabilities. There is a strategic plan in place for the expansion of the school buildings.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school has a full complement of well qualified teaching staff. It has 20 support/ learning assistants who are deployed in KG and grade 1 classrooms. There is a full time librarian. The interactive whiteboards in all classrooms are supported by an effective Wi-Fi network. School buses are of a high standard of safety and maintenance, with satellite tracking systems by which parents can contact their children while on the bus.

The library, while spacious, has few books and no computers. The school acknowledges in its school evaluation form (SEF) that library resources are limited in scope and predominated by Arabic texts. The SEF also recognises that classroom resources are limited to mainly textbooks and interactive whiteboards. Students in a grade 7 English class brought in their own iPads to use to look up new vocabulary as there are no English dictionaries. In a grade 5 English lesson, students had no access to a thesaurus or dictionary. Access to ICT is inadequate. There are only 20 laptop computers for the whole school. Resources in specialist rooms are poor. In music there is only one keyboard and no other instruments. There is limited PE and art equipment. Good quality resources in KG are used effectively.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management have, in two semesters, established the basic conditions for an effective school. There is a shared vision and a cohesive senior leadership team. They maintain a high profile around the school. The principal has secured the confidence and support of staff, parents and students. Staff morale is high. The school has yet to secure effective links with outside organisations.

Structures, systems, policies, and procedures and routines have been established. These ensure the smooth day to day running of the school. It is a well-documented school. All policies are in place. A staff handbook and student handbook detail clear guidance and expectations.

The school self-evaluation document (SEF) is mostly accurate and the school development plan (SDP) addresses the correct priorities. Lesson observations are routinely undertaken by senior staff, and individual feedback to teachers is provided. The school has recently appointed subject coordinators to oversee core subjects.

There is some over-involvement of the owner's representative, who is the chair of the board of governors, in the daily management of the school. The principal has limited financial involvement as the funding for the SDP is in the hands of the holding company. Responsibility and accountability for recruitment and for the line management of staff are unclear. The chair of the board of governors had a high level of involvement in the setting up the new school before the appointment of the principal in August 2013. He has not yet relinquished many of these responsibilities to school leaders. The full board of governors is not meeting regularly. It has not assumed corporate responsibility and accountability for the strategic leadership of the school.

Capacity for further development

The school leadership, with the support of the board of governors and the proprietor, has the capacity over the next two years, to move the school forward and raise standards. Firm foundations for effective learning have been established in the KG. This will help to secure a strong starting point on which to build attainment and progress in all subjects in the future.

The holding company has a strategic plan in place for the future expansion of the school. This has been costed appropriately and shared with the owner who owns two adjacent plots of land adjacent to the existing school buildings. One of these plots is designated for a KG building and the other for a high school building.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise standards and progress in all subjects by:
 - i. introducing standardised tests to measure students' attainment and enable comparisons with other schools
 - ii. improving students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all subjects
 - iii. using assessment data to set challenging targets for students, so that they understand how to improve.

2. Improve the quality of teaching and learning so all lessons are at least satisfactory by:
 - i. sharing good practice, especially from KG teachers
 - ii. reducing teacher talk time so that students have opportunities to be active, independent learners
 - iii. deploying all adults in the classroom so they can support students' learning more effectively.
3. Develop and widen resources in classrooms and the library, especially ICT provision and equipment in specialist areas, such as PE, art and music, by:
 - i. drawing up a 2 year plan for the expansion of ICT provision throughout the school
 - ii. ensuring all classes have sets of English and Arabic dictionaries
 - iii. having a strategic plan for the purchase of equipment for music, PE and art.
4. Address the different needs of all students, including those with special educational needs and gifted and talented students by:
 - i. appointing a special needs coordinator to lead and manage the identification of and support for students with special educational needs
 - ii. requiring teachers to identify and plan for more able students in their lessons with more challenging tasks, questions and extension work.
5. Clarify the roles and responsibilities of school board members, the chair of the board and the proprietor by:
 - i. establishing clear and transparent lines of responsibilities for the board members, the chair of the board, the proprietor and the principal, in line with ADEC guidance (Handbook, Organising regulations of Private Schools Regulation 26. 2013)
 - ii. ensuring the full board of governors meet regularly.

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								