



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



Summary Inspection Report

Ashbal Al Quds Private Secondary School

Published in 2013

Iqraa

Ashbal Al Quds Private Secondary School

Inspection Date	08 th – 11 th October, 2012
School ID#	019
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	2400
Age Range	KG- Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Omayya elwan Abdel Hafiz Hasan
School Address	Khalifa City B, Street 25, Zone 11
Telephone Number	(+971) 02 5861124
Fax Number	(+971) 02 5861124
Email (ADEC)	asbalalquds.pvt@adec.ac.ae

Introduction

Five inspectors inspected the school. During their time in school, the inspectors met with school leaders, teachers, students and parents from the primary and secondary sections. The inspectors observed 115 lessons, assemblies, break periods and students' arrival at and departure from the school. They analysed data and documents supplied by the school. In addition, they analysed and considered responses to a parental questionnaire about the school.

Description of the School

The school opened in 1986 and moved to its present purpose-built accommodation in 2009. It is located in Khalifa City South, a residential area in the early stages of development. The school aims to provide, 'an outstanding education to prepare a generation able to invest in successes'. The main nationalities represented are Emirati (26%), Jordanian (22%), Palestinian (12%), Syrian (12%), Egyptian (10%) and Yemeni (6%). The remaining students come from other Arabic nations and Gulf States. The school teaches the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum in all grades, with the introduction of English at the beginning of Kindergarten (KG). Screening takes place prior to entry. All students are accepted, except those the principal feels would not be suited to the education that the school offers. The fees range from AED 7,000 in KG to AED 14,000 in grade 12. This puts them in, what is considered, 'the low affordable range'. There are additional fees for transport and books. Teachers' monthly salaries vary and are based upon length of service and experience. They range from AED 5,000 to AED 10,000. The principal has been in post for 28 years.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged Asbal Al Quds Private Secondary School to be in Band C, that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The school was judged to be unsatisfactory at its last inspection in February 2010. It has made minimal progress in addressing identified issues. The impact of training to improve teacher performance is evident in only a small minority of classes. Leadership roles lack clarity and accountability and thus, remain ineffective. Strategic planning is insufficiently robust to be a useful tool for planned improvement. Students' personal development shows some improvement but incidences of unruly behaviour are still apparent and this demonstrates the fragility of the progress made.

There is a positive ethos in the school, which is a result of the positive attitude demonstrated by the principal. Most students are confident, polite and enjoy

coming to school. They see it as an extension of their family. Relations among and within this diverse school community are good. Students feel cared for and respect their teachers. However, the guidance they receive is not sufficient to enable them to make decisions about their future. There are clear parameters that enable students to be sure about the right way to behave. Rewards and sanctions are in place and are understood by students and staff. This means that education takes place in a positive environment.

Standards are in line with MoE expectations by grade 12. The school has a wealth of data but it is not analysed, nor used effectively to measure progress or achievement. There is no baseline assessment in Kindergarten (KG) to enable teachers to be aware of the skills and abilities of the youngest students on admission. Standards and progress are poor in KG because the limited and inappropriate teaching styles do not provide for the varied learning needs of young children. Overall, standards in the school fall short of those expected internationally.

The school does not track student progress in order to measure the impact of teaching and to guide improvements where acceleration is needed. Testing in grades 1 to 5 is in place but lacks any form of standardisation. Thus, there is a strong risk of inaccurate assessment of performance. MoE testing occurs for the remaining grades. Whilst the results from these tests are recorded, they are only used to identify students who will be retained in a particular grade for an additional year. Such retentions are relatively high, averaging approximately 20 students per annum. This is against Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) policy. The school recognises that girls out-perform boys but nothing has been done to address this issue. Data is not used to drive improvements in student performance and experiences of learning. Progress and attendant standards are low up to grades 8 and 9. This reflects the unsatisfactory teaching prevalent in these grades. Progress accelerates from grade 9 onwards as students are exposed to more varied teaching strategies. Standards also improve in grades 10 – 12, especially for girls in science and mathematics, but within this age group there is also an increase in private tuition. By grade 12, a significant percentage of students score 90% plus in MoE tests. Nevertheless, student ability to think critically and solve problems by applying their knowledge, remains significantly short of best international expectations because teaching does not effectively address these aspects of learning.

Progress is unsatisfactory in all subjects except Islamic studies. Students read the Holy Qur'an fluently and with good intonation. They understand Islamic values, such as the main pillars of Islam and the importance of prayer. Student progress is limited by the lack of opportunities to practice and develop speaking and writing

skills in Arabic. This pattern is reflected in English, where an absence of reading books and limited opportunities to write, adversely affect progress in language acquisition. Structures like the past continuous tense are not introduced until grade 7, even though students quickly understand grammatical conventions. Learning in science is knowledge driven and there are few opportunities for students to engage in research and develop their thinking and problem-solving scientific skills. Workbooks offer insufficient challenge and dominate mathematics teaching in lower classes. As a result, students have few opportunities to apply their knowledge in problem-solving or practical situations. Overall, mental maths, investigational skills and higher order thinking skills are insufficiently developed across the school. Children learning Arabic and English in KG are introduced to letters and numbers in isolation and thus their learning lacks purpose and context. These youngest students are given insufficient opportunities to appropriately experience learning through play or to interact in social groups. Because their developmental needs are not met, learning is restricted. Lack of teachers' expectation and a slavish adherence to the curriculum pacing guide, makes little allowance for differing student needs and restricts progress in all subjects.

Students are positive about the school and they enjoy attending. Most have respect for their teachers, even when teaching is less than satisfactory. This is not always the case with younger students, who sometimes become disruptive, especially when the teaching does not engage or interest them. In addition, some students exhibit a lack of self-discipline when unsupervised. One female student explained this, saying, 'We sit there all day and sometimes we just have to freak out'. In discussion, students talk with confidence and are able to articulate their thoughts, values and views but they have too few opportunities to use these skills in lessons. This adversely affects their preparation for future life. The school population comprises students from numerous nations. Relationships between them are good and students express respect for other cultures and the values of the UAE. National Day is celebrated with enthusiasm, and music and dance from other countries is embraced by all. Quotations from the Holy Qur'an are painted on walls around the school as a constant reminder of ways to act if success is to be achieved.

Teachers are qualified, but not always competent, to teach effectively. They have received professional development but this has had little impact on their teaching. Students make unsatisfactory progress because the quality of teaching is weak in all but a handful of classes. Teachers adhere strictly to the MoE curriculum irrespective of the varying needs of individuals and groups. The didactic teaching strategy that is largely adopted, results in students sitting inactive and merely listening for extended periods. Poor questioning and undemanding activities fail

to extend students' thinking or spark their interest. As a result, younger students, including those in KG, become disengaged and, at times, disruptive. Older students are passive recipients of knowledge with few opportunities to participate. This significantly limits independent learning and the opportunity to question and reflect. No effective assessment takes place to guide planning for lessons. All students receive the same content and learning experiences within lessons. Because of this, less-able students lack adequate support and the more-able lack challenge. Opportunities to collaborate in groups, and develop necessary interpersonal and leadership skills, are rare. There are more opportunities for discussion and collaborative working in grades 10 to 12 but these remain insufficient to ensure critical and analytical skills become well developed.

Whilst the curriculum complies with basic MoE requirements in Arabic, English, mathematics, Islamic studies, social studies and science it falls below expected standards internationally. Music and art are taught until grade 9. Physical education (PE) is timetabled for grade 12 girls but the classes do not take place. There is no planned curriculum for KG. One resulting weakness is a lack of opportunity for students to develop motor skills or engage in experiential play. Teachers do not adapt or amend the curriculum to provide a variety of experiences or to differentiate tasks. There are no extra-curricular activities to broaden learning. Although boys enjoy sports competitions against other schools, these occasions are too infrequent to be meaningful learning experiences. Opportunities to develop personal skills and independence through links with organisations in the wider community are limited. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because it lacks breadth and depth. It fails to provide the skills and understanding that prepare students for future life.

Resources to support the curriculum are unsatisfactory. There are no teaching assistants and learning experiences, particularly for KG students, are more limited as a result. Resources are sufficient in KG but under-utilised or used badly. Digital projectors are employed as a whiteboard but their full potential is not realised. Students do not have access to class-based computers for research or multi-media presentation of work. The school has three computer rooms. Room utilisation is scheduled and this limits their usefulness. Individuals and groups are not able to use the room for research as and when the need arises. Technology to support language acquisition in Arabic and English is minimal. There are no reading books to develop literacy skills and the rate and quality of language development suffers. The library is badly resourced. There are insufficient books and too limited a range of genre and subject matter to promote research or engagement with literature. Science laboratories are adequately resourced but are too small for class sizes or practical work. Sports equipment is inadequate and there are

insufficient classroom materials to appropriately support active learning. This leads to the narrow over-reliance on work books and work sheets Relationships are good throughout the school. The principal is well liked by all and, through her example, has developed a positive caring ethos throughout the school. Students state that there are teachers to whom they would go with a problem. Good work is celebrated in assembly and students receive certificates for good attitudes and efforts. This means that assembly is used effectively to transmit messages which reflect the ethos of care, kindness and understanding. The school does not have a child-protection policy and this is an important weakness. It does comply with ADEC requirements by carrying out moral checks on all personnel. Attendance is carefully monitored and destination data on students is recorded. There is no prayer room for girls.

Whilst classrooms are of an adequate size, large numbers in some classes do limit the teaching strategies employed. Three science laboratories are insufficient for the number of students, as is the small library. The absence of a gymnasium and inadequate outside sporting facilities also limit the curriculum.

Areas for KG play have safety surfaces and are secure. Evacuation procedures are carried out in a timely fashion. The guard does not routinely check all visitors to ensure security and safety. Electrical equipment is not checked regularly and fire extinguishers are not easily accessible. Cleaning materials are left unattended in student toilets and are a hazard. Doors between the girls and boys section are locked to prevent interaction between genders. These are evacuation routes and such practice is potentially dangerous. Buses often lack seatbelts and, if in place, are not worn. This range of weaknesses in health and safety practices and procedures present a significant risk to all within the school.

The principal has been in post for 28 years. She has developed a benevolent, autocratic leadership style and she is the fulcrum of all that happens. The school is too large and complex for this management style to be effective in driving the school forward. Key managers are in place, but lack of delegation of authority and clarity of responsibilities significantly reduces their impact. Lesson observations carried out by co-ordinators are insufficiently rigorous and have little impact on teacher effectiveness. This is because they focus on teaching, not student learning. School self-evaluation is insufficiently robust. Grades are too generous and are not derived from an agreed rubric which identifies what 'good' looks like. The school improvement plan has too many objectives to be manageable and few are appropriately focused on raising student performance. It is not a valuable tool to enable necessary improvements. The principal is highly committed and passionate about the school and its students. Nevertheless, students make unsatisfactory progress and, as a result, the school does not give value for money.

The current leadership structure and the lack of effective delegation means that the school has unsatisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. As a matter of urgency, respond fully to the issues raised in the previous inspection report.
2. Improve leadership by:
 - i. delegating responsibility to the senior leadership team, including subject leaders, ensuring they have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and can be held accountable;
 - ii. ensuring that senior leaders have the capacity to undertake rigorous, accurate and learning focussed evaluations of teaching and provide pertinent developmental feedback to teachers that drives improvement; and
 - iii. producing a manageable school-improvement plan sharply focused on student outcomes, sharing this with staff and identifying roles, responsibilities, actions, evaluation criteria and realistic time scales.
3. Raise student attainment by:
 - i. implementing effective assessment at class, subject and whole school level and ensure students receive regular feedback about what they are doing well and how to improve their work; and
 - ii. analysing data and using the subsequent information to set and track challenging targets for all, and enable older students to accurately monitor their own progress.
4. Improve teachers' ability to use strategies to enrich the curriculum to meet the learning needs of all students by:
 - i. ensuring planned learning challenges and meeting the needs of students of all age-groups and abilities;
 - ii. providing students with a greater breadth and variety of engaging learning experiences, including opportunities for students to work together on rich and meaningful tasks; and
 - iii. enabling students to undertake research and become independent learners so that they extend and develop their thinking.