



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



Summary Inspection Report

Abu Dhabi Australian School

Published in 2013

Iqraa

Abu Dhabi Australian School

Inspection Date	26 th – 29 th May, 2013
School ID#	027
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	International Baccalaureate
Number of Students	969
Age Range	KG1 – Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Bruce Handley
School Address	PO Box 34170, Khalifa City B, GPS: 24.3543, 54.6369
Telephone Number	(+971) 02 5866980/ (+971) 02 5866981
Fax Number	(+971) 02 5866982
Email (ADEC)	adaustralian.pvt@adec.ac.ae

Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors who observed 60 lessons as well as assemblies, break periods, and students' arrival and departure. They met with school leaders, support staff, teachers, students and parents. Inspectors scrutinised students' written work, and analysed performance data and documents provided by the school. In addition responses from parents to a questionnaire were analysed.

Description of the School

The Australian School of Abu Dhabi (ASAD) opened for KG-Grade 3 in temporary accommodation in 2006. In 2007 the school moved to its permanent building at Khalifa City B. ASAD is one of 4 member schools of the Australian International Academy; the other three are located in Australia. It is an authorised International Baccalaureate World school and offers the three IB Programmes. Its vision is 'to have graduates who are well prepared and self-motivated to advance their country and to participate effectively as World citizens with Universal Values. The school aims to offer a holistic education that prepares students for life, service, leadership and membership of the global community.'

Thirty nationalities are represented amongst students, of whom 80% are Emirati. Other significant groups are from Yemen, Egypt, Oman, Australia and Pakistan. Ninety per cent of students are Arabs and 93% are Muslim.

There are a total of 969 students, 557 boys and 412 girls. The school is organised into the Primary Years Programme (PYP) with 217 children in Kindergarten (KG) and 495 students in Grades 1-5; the Middle Years Programme (MYP) with 234 students in Grades 6-10; and the Diploma programme (DP) with 23 students in Grades 11-12. Eighteen students have been identified with special educational needs (SEN). Almost all students have English as an Additional Language (EAL) and in Grades 1-5 up to 10% are withdrawn from some lessons for additional support for identified language needs.

Fees range from AED 14,261 for KG, to AED 33,841 for Grade 12. Teachers' salaries range from AED 112,000 to AED 206,000 per year.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged the Australian School of Abu Dhabi to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

Attainment and progress in English, science, mathematics, Arabic, Islamic studies, social studies and information and communication technology (ICT) are below the expected levels of schools following the same curriculum, as well as best international standards. Students' work, particularly for boys and high achievers, demonstrates that they are making slower than expected progress from their starting points, especially in gaining 21st century skills. For example, although students work cooperatively, in all subjects many lack the confidence to think creatively, research independently, and work purposefully in collaborative groups.

KG children do not make sufficient progress and their attainment is lower than expected because they are not given adequate opportunities to learn through play and child-initiated activities so as to develop. In English and Arabic, oral skills are well-developed and students express themselves with increasing confidence as they progress through the school. For example, MYP students who were setting up their personal projects explained the activity well, but they were less secure in expressing their learning journey while developing the projects. Attainment and progress in oral skills made by PYP students during EAL withdrawal lessons are particularly effective. Students' writing skills in spelling, grammar and sentence structure are less well-developed and some teachers do not sufficiently provide opportunities for individual extended writing. Throughout the school, students demonstrate basic numeracy skills with confidence. However, they demonstrate more limited ability when applying mathematical concepts and problem-solving strategies. This is especially in PYP when, for instance, making calculations of perimeter and area. Standards in science for many students are below expectations as a result of less well-developed practical investigative skills. Students have a basic knowledge, and demonstrate respect, of Islam. They are not always able to recite verses from the Quran using 'Tajweed' rules and are given too few opportunities to develop understanding and to link Islamic values to their behaviour. Most students demonstrate basic knowledge, and appreciation of, and respect for, the UAE and their leaders.

Girls and boys in the younger grades are well-behaved and courteous in lessons and around the school. They are respectful and friendly with each other and adults and show positive attitudes towards school. Kindergarten students show confidence and discipline when performing on stage to large audiences. During

assembly, many boys do not sing and show a lack of respect for the National Anthem and raising of the flag. Where teachers do not consistently apply strategies to manage and supervise behaviour, or lessons lack challenge, there is low level disruption amongst older boys and this disturbs other students and classes in nearby rooms. Students show respect for UAE culture and traditions, yet are less aware of cultural differences. In the best lessons, particularly MYP English, students work well independently and on short collaborative tasks and take appropriate responsibility for their learning. However, this is inconsistent across the school, with too few meaningful opportunities given to develop these skills as well as those of confident and positive leadership. Equally, there are not enough activities in order to develop the inter-personal, research and ICT skills that students need as they progress through the school and prepare for employment. Students make choices which show an understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. While attendance is satisfactory at 91%, a significant number of students are not punctual at the start of the day and to lessons.

Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is generally secure. There are well-developed, caring and respectful relationships between most teachers and students. PYP classrooms and corridors, especially, present a print-rich and plentiful display of students' work and this motivates and develops their curiosity. In the most effective lessons, activities and teaching cater to students' different interests and abilities, and students are engaged and challenged. Satisfactory support is given to EAL students during withdrawal lessons with a focus on developing oral skills. Daily lesson planning is often limited to an outline, with insufficient attention being given to students' prior learning or to detail to guide teaching that meets the needs of all abilities. Consequently, EAL students, high achievers and those who experience difficulties are given insufficient challenge or targeted support and do not make the expected progress in many lessons. Learning objectives are infrequently shared at the start of lessons or revisited at the end, so that students are not sufficiently aware of their learning targets in order to be able to reflect on the progress they are making. A range of effective and appropriate teaching strategies is not used consistently by all teachers. Lessons predominantly use a whole-class approach and are teacher-directed. Questioning techniques frequently require only factual responses, limiting students' need to justify and think creatively. Narrow resource use that is often limited to whiteboard, talk and paper, as well as limited opportunities for practical application in mathematics and science, do not sufficiently engage students or promote understanding. Formative assessment and student self-assessment are used successfully in the most effective lessons in all subjects. Teachers make less use of the results of continuous assessment during lessons to adapt their teaching

to the differing needs of students. Equally, while portfolios successfully gather samples of students work, they are less successfully used along with rubrics to monitor student progress and identify for teachers and students their targets for improvement. Teacher aides are under-utilised and often do no more than watch activities.

ASAD offers a broad range of subjects within the three IB programmes as well as the MoE curriculum for Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies. The requirements for cooperative long-term planning by subject and grade teachers lead to schemes of work and meaningful cross-curricular inquiry throughout the year in PYP and MYP, and ICT is integrated as a specialist subject and tool for learning. Curriculum delivery does not adequately address the different learning needs of all students, in particular the social and personal needs of older boys. Curriculum implementation for MoE social studies, Arabic and Islamic studies is textbook-based with few enrichment activities, or opportunities for research and project-based learning and community service. The school offers a restricted range of extra-curricular activities at additional cost to students and participation is limited. The school is developing some links with external partners which enrich students' learning, such as the weekly participation in KG classes by children from a special needs centre.

The school has a positive ethos, and a counsellor and social worker cater to students' needs. The behaviour policy and procedures, which are shared with students and parents, have led to significant improvement in behaviour and attitudes in the past year and this is recognised and appreciated by parents. Despite this, behaviour management by staff is inconsistent, and rewards and consequences are not having sufficient impact on improving the behaviour of boys in general and specifically those who are disruptive and disrespectful. Corporal punishment is forbidden. Students are appropriately supervised around school and at the end of the day when they are leaving on school buses. Inadequate supervision and procedures are in place to ensure their safe departure when collected by private transport. Although SEN students are identified, there is too limited a link between the specialist planning and the provision in lessons to meet their needs. Students and staff take advantage of the two large rooms provided for prayer. Required checks are made on all staff and the central register is close to completion. There remain two members of staff who do not yet have ADEC approval. The school provides helpful career and college guidance to the small group of DP students. The clinic, although small, provides an adequate first aid facility.

The buildings mostly present a fit-for-purpose learning environment and are carefully maintained in a safe and hygienic condition. The exception is the KG area where classrooms are small and provide limited space for an age-appropriate, active and resource-rich programme. Adequate science and ICT laboratories, as well as music and art rooms, are provided and the internal facilities, including the swimming pool, provide well for physical education. The school shows commitment to improving facilities, such as the recently opened auditorium that caters effectively for large events. Extensive shading is provided in the outside assembly, physical education (PE) and play areas. Electrical and other equipment is regularly tested and maintained in a safe working condition. Security does not sufficiently secure the buildings from unwanted intruders since there are open front gates with no systematic security procedure to monitor access onto the premises.

There are sufficient qualified staff who are developing their knowledge and understanding of the IB programmes. The accent and grammar of some teachers in English poses difficulty for some students and slows their progress. The range of resources in classrooms is limited and they are not always used effectively by teachers to engage students and support their learning. Classrooms lack modern technology for use by teachers and students, and this limits the effective integration and development of ICT skills. Specialist resources such as those for science, PE, music and art support the programmes offered by the school. They are not always used to best effect to promote skill development and fully engage students. The library stock is very limited for the number and age range of students, and to promote literacy in Arabic and English as well as research and independent study skills. School buses are maintained regularly. The canteens are clean and offer nutritious choices.

The management structure and organisation ensure the smooth daily running of the school. The senior leadership is committed to school improvement and their impact is evident in the development of the IB programmes, particularly the MYP and PYP, which has led to full authorisation, and in the prompt and positive response to parent concerns in the past year. The Director General, in his role of chairman of the board, guides policy-making and finance. He is supportive of the school and its development, yet he has less knowledge of the specific priority needs that relate to improvements in teaching, learning and student outcomes. Self-evaluation lacks rigour and is over-generous particularly with regard to the impact of provision on student outcomes. The school improvement plan was developed by the Principal with limited input from staff, parents or students. Nevertheless, it gives attention to identifying strategic priorities. Professional development has focused successfully on meeting the requirements of IB

authorisation. Appraisal and performance management do not yet give enough attention to identifying teaching needs, setting targets with support and monitoring in order to ensure improvement in the quality of teaching. There is insufficient connection between the results of lesson observations and provision of professional development in order to meet individual teaching needs and build competency.

ASAD has yet to establish a system that ensures regular feedback from parents about the school. The recently created student representative council is dependent on a few keen students and is currently having limited effect in providing communication between students and the school. Despite a low return, parent questionnaire responses were mostly positive. The improvements made over the previous year demonstrate a heavy reliance on the capabilities of the Principal and key coordinators. Overall the school shows unsatisfactory capacity for improvement. The school is not yet meeting its aspirational vision and is not currently offering good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise students' attainment and improve progress in all subjects by providing:
 - i. more opportunities for them to develop research, inquiry and practical skills both independently and in cooperative groups; and
 - ii. targeted support for students throughout the school who are not sufficiently proficient in the language of instruction.
2. Improve teaching and learning by:
 - i. identifying and sharing best teaching practice;
 - ii. providing and using a wider range of classroom-based ICT and material resources to enhance curriculum delivery and development of skills and understanding;
 - iii. increasing the range of appropriate teaching and learning strategies in order to motivate, support, and meet the learning needs of all students; and
 - iv. using the results of assessment during lessons to inform planning and make adjustments to teaching.
3. Strengthen leadership and management at all levels through:
 - i. training for middle leaders to establish confidence and skills in order for them to drive improvements in the quality and impact of teaching;

- ii. rigorous and structured self-evaluation which guides prioritized strategic improvement planning and includes input from all sections of the school community; and
 - iii. regular professional development for teachers which is closely linked to the results of lesson observations and targets individual and whole-school teaching needs in order to develop high quality teaching throughout the school.
4. Urgently address the safety issues raised during the inspection by implementing:
- i. a secure system which ensures careful monitoring of entry onto the premises; and
 - ii. a system for departure by private vehicles in order to ensure the safety of students as they leave school.