



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



Summary Inspection Report

Baraa'im Al Ain Private School

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Baraaaim Al Ain Private School

Inspection Date	14 th – 18 th April, 2012
School ID#	150
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education and American
Number of Students	966
Age Range	KG – Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Latifa Saif El Ryami
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Introduction

The school was inspected by four inspectors. They observed 82 lessons, attended assemblies, and met with groups of students and the subject leadership team. The inspectors considered the ethos of the school, the quality of the students' learning experiences, personal development and progress, and the quality of teaching and how well this helps the students to learn.

Description of the School

The school opened in 1979. It is one of the oldest in Al Ain. The school occupies an enclosed site and consists of three teaching blocks, an administration block and a newly opened kindergarten (KG) building. The school's motto is: 'To enable students to achieve the best standards and achieve the best for their country.'

There are 109 children in the KG section, 395 students in cycle 1 and 462 in cycles 2 and 3. Boys and girls are taught in mixed classes up to grade 5, and single-sex classes from grades 5 to 12. Approximately 56% are Egyptian, 13% are from the UAE, and the rest from a variety of other Arabic speaking countries. Arabic is the first language of all the students. No students are identified as having special educational needs, although four have hearing problems that are catered for with hearing aids. The school teaches the MoE curriculum from KG to grade 12 and a parallel American curriculum up to Grade 6. Admission is by interview and a short written test. School fees range from AED 4000 to 9500, plus between AED 425 and 1300 for books. Teachers' monthly salaries are between AED 2000 and 4500.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged Baraa'im Al Ain Private School to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The school has started to address some of the issues identified in its last inspection, and this is beginning to improve the quality of education offered. The principal and the vice principal have started to review the work of the school, and now have clear ideas about what they need to do to make it better. They have produced a school improvement plan, although this is too long and does not focus sharply enough on exactly what needs to be done, by when and by whom. The leadership team are starting to observe teaching and provide feedback to staff. Their limited understanding of what quality teaching looks like is undermining the impact of these observations, which are at an early stage of development. Subject leaders hold meetings with the principal to discuss aspects of school life. These focus too much on day-to-day activities, and not enough on how to raise the standards of the students' work.

Standards and progress are low in the key subjects of Islamic studies, English, science and social studies, as well as in art and physical education. This applies equally to the American curriculum and the MoE curriculum. Across the school boys do not do as well as girls. Students' progress in acquiring mathematical skills is satisfactory. In English and Arabic they have insufficient opportunities to express themselves and acquire new language skills. In all subjects, students are not given enough opportunity to apply the knowledge they acquire whilst working through the textbooks and workbooks. In the KG the children learn to form the shapes of letters by tracing and colouring. They have no opportunity to develop their language skills by singing, playing together or taking part in meaningful role-play. In all classes, students have too few opportunities to work independently, engage in their own research, express their views, or use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning.

Attainment in ADEC tests and teacher assessments is good throughout the school, but the results do not compare favourably with international standards and are not supported by standards seen during the inspection. In all tests, and in the lessons seen, girls do better than boys in all subjects. The school has done nothing to address this issue and puts it down to 'cultural issues'. The good test results are not reflected in the work seen in the classrooms, where students are rarely able to demonstrate the skills they have acquired. This is because of the rigid nature of the curriculum and the lack of discussion and debate due to the teacher-dominated format of the lessons. These weaknesses have a particularly marked effect on the progress of the more-able students, who complete their work first and are then asked to help the less-able students rather than being provided with more challenging tasks.

Most of the students stay for the whole of their school life, and only move when their parents relocate. Students show great respect for each other and their teachers, and have a very positive attitude to learning and wider school life. Behaviour is good. Students are developing a real understanding of the culture and nature of the UAE. They stand respectfully as the flag is raised and sing the national anthem with gusto and enthusiasm. The recently created heritage area is helping to promote this understanding. Links outside the school are not well enough developed, although older students do have the opportunity to visit the university to discuss career and higher education options. By the time they leave school, the students are confident and feel well prepared for their future lives.

The quality of teaching is not good enough to enable students to make the progress they are capable of. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge but stick rigidly to the narrow textbook-based curriculum. A firm emphasis on

completing the relevant page of the workbook means that students cannot apply what they are learning. On occasions, progress in English is slowed by inaccurate modelling of the language by the teacher and mis-spelling of words on the whiteboard. Too many activities are repetitive and merely involve students repeating work they can already do. Interaction between teachers and students is limited by the nature of the questions asked, but when students are given the opportunity to lead a lesson their peers listen with attention and maturity. In the KG classes, students spend too much time sitting at desks quietly working alone rather than interacting and learning through doing. In all grades, the strict adherence to the relevant workbook and the lack of basic materials mean that students do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their collaborative learning and thinking skills. Teachers do not provide learning targets for students. The behaviour in classrooms is good, and teachers and students alike show a warmth and respect for each other. Students say that teachers ‘are here to help us if we need them’.

The time allocated to each curriculum areas is adequate to enable a reasonably balanced curriculum to be offered. The school has identified no children with special educational needs and provision for the more able is not developed, so these groups do not make sufficient progress. The curriculum is structured in such a way that it inhibits the development of students’ independent working skills. In all subjects, too much reliance on textbooks and workbooks means that the curriculum is too narrow. The culture and understanding of UAE life are promoted through daily assemblies and the children remember with enthusiasm the celebrations for the 40th National Day in December. There is no significant difference in progress between students studying the MoE or American curriculum. Neither, as implemented, compare well to international practice; they do not, for example, set out how students will progress through identified learning outcomes. The extra-curricular activities offered are very limited and do not happen on a regular basis. This limits students’ opportunities to interact together in a social setting. Students occasionally play sports matches against other schools and attend debating competitions.

The protection, care, guidance and support offered for students, with the exception of the safety on school transport, are a strength of the school. Relationships between students and staff are well developed, and students know they can ask for help if they need it. The school makes sure that all staff have been passed by ADEC as suitable to be employed as teachers. Entry to the school is controlled by a very smart and efficient security guard, who takes a pride in ensuring no one accesses the school without undergoing security checks and signing in. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Written guidance on

what to do if a teacher suspects a child is being harmed has recently been posted at the school. The two social workers follow up any concerns quickly and a first day response to absence ensures attendance is good. There have been no exclusions, and the positive reward system run by the social workers encourages good behaviour. The school provides separate mosques for boys and girls. The effectively-run clinic ensures that the health and safety of the students are promoted appropriately. The daily snack sold is generally healthy, and the facilities for storage of this are adequate.

The buildings and premises do not provide a high-quality environment that promotes effective learning. Apart from the new KG block, the buildings are old and clearly in need of refurbishment. Some classrooms are too small and cramped for the number of students. The very noisy air conditionings units in some rooms make it difficult for students to hear the teacher, and prevent them from engaging in discussion and debate. Tables and chairs are old and of differing sizes, making it difficult to put them together to enable students to work in groups. The science labs are badly equipped and have no gas supply. Some fire extinguishers were out of date, but the school remedied this during the inspection. There is not enough shade in the boys' playground, and the floor in the area for the younger students does not have a safety surface. The school has good security measures to prevent unwanted visitors from accessing the site. The school has delegated responsibility for health and safety to suitable people.

The school's resources are too poor to support its aims. There are sufficient qualified teachers, but class sizes vary widely and this can affect the quality of interaction between teachers and students. With the exception of some recently purchased televisions, the school has little equipment to support teachers, even in the new KG building. In most classrooms the only materials available are the textbooks and workbooks. Despite this, teachers work hard to try to deliver a more interesting education to the students, for example, buying their own materials such as paper cups and straws to support mathematics lessons. The library is too small and the range and quality of books are not good enough to enable students to develop independent learning skills. There are no library facilities for students in KG to grade 5. The two science laboratories lack basic scientific equipment, and this limits the level of experimentation that can take place. The two ICT labs are too small, and students are unable to integrate the use of ICT into their day-to-day lessons to support learning. Buses are still unsafe and have no seat belts except on the front seat. They are sometimes overcrowded. Food sold by the school has suitable storage facilities to keep it fresh and safe for the students.

Given the extent of the improvements still required, the school provides unsatisfactory value for money. The principal has set up suitable structures to improve the school and in some areas this beginning to have an effect, for example in the new KG building. Parents and students show great loyalty to the school, and relationships with parents are encouraged through the termly meetings and issuing of report cards. The school has a suitable system for dealing with parental complaints. Without better resources and suitable training for teachers to improve their skills, the school still does not have adequate capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - i. further developing self-evaluation processes, using the results to produce a concise, revised and sharply-focused school improvement plan that identifies clear and precise actions to increase students' progress; and
 - ii. providing focused training for teachers to develop and share good practice.
2. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. ensuring that the school buildings are fit for purpose, and resources are varied and sufficient to enable the teachers to deliver high-quality learning;
 - ii. providing sufficient resources in the KG classes to support a good activity-based curriculum;
 - iii. providing learning activities based on prior knowledge of students' attainment, with suitable activities to engage all students but especially boys and the more able;
 - iv. extending the students' work beyond the limitations of textbooks and workbooks to apply what they have learnt; and
 - v. providing increased opportunities for students to work independently and beyond the confines of the limited curriculum.