



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



Inspection Report

Beit Al Maqdes

Academic Year 2013 – 14

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Beit Al Maqdes

Inspection Date	20 – 23 January 2014
School ID#	100
Licensed Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)
Number of Students	2018
Age Range	5 to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Hussain Abu Mousa
School Address	East 11, Commercial Musaffah, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 552 5605
Fax Number	-----
Official Email (ADEC)	beitalmaqdes.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	-----
Date of last inspection	11 – 14 October 2012

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 5
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The main strengths of the school are:

- the principal and staff cultivate an ethos of mutual caring that permeates every area of school life
- students have very positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school
- attendance is consistently very good throughout the school at 97%
- the development of group work enables students to take an active part in their learning
- the creation of specialist curriculum areas to enhance students' learning.

The main areas for improvement are:

- the school's self-evaluation process is not sufficiently accurate to enable the school to fully understand what it does well and what needs improving
 - senior staff and teachers do not use information about the performance of individual students and groups of students in order to target improvement
 - teachers lack secure understanding of how young children learn best
 - those students who find learning difficult do not receive effective support and those that find it easy are not sufficiently challenged
 - students in cycle 3 classes do not receive sufficient guidance on next steps in their education or working life.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by a team of 6 inspectors who observed 106 lessons as well as assemblies, snack and break periods, and student's arrival and departure. They met with school leaders, teachers, students and parents. Inspectors scrutinised students' work, and analysed performance data and documents provided by the school. In addition, 189 responses from parents to a questionnaire were analysed.

Description of the School

Beit Al Maqdes International Private School is situated in the commercial area of Musaffah, on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi. The Beit Al Maqdes International Private School Group opened the school in 2000 and its current owner took over four years ago. The school aims to provide a supportive and caring learning environment in which students can achieve their potential. The school's values are enshrined in its motto 'One loving family'. The number of students on roll has grown steadily and currently there are 2018 students, of which 53% are boys and 47% are girls. Almost all students are Muslim, there are a small number of Christians. All but a very small number of students are of Arabic heritage and come mainly from Jordan (19%), Syria (25%), the Yemen (12%), Palestine (11%) and Egypt (18%). Only 1.3% student proportion is of Emirati heritage.

The school serves the local working community in the commercial area close to the school. Admission to the school is based on an initial assessment of ability. In recent years the school has accepted a large number of children from Syria and these now represent a quarter of the school's population. There are no students identified as having special educational needs (SEN). Student retention rates are very high.

School fees are low and range from AED 4,914 in KG to AED 10,020 in Grade 12. An additional small charge is made for uniforms and books. Fees have not risen in the last three years. The teaching staff are all Muslim and from Arab heritage backgrounds. The turnover of staff is very low in comparison to other international schools and was less than 10% for the beginning of the current academic year. The school was last inspected in October 2012.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Standards are satisfactory overall. Despite the influx of many new students with limited experience of formal schooling, the improvements made to the quality of teaching and learning have successfully minimised the impact on student achievement. The standards achieved by most students fall just short of international standards. They are similar to schools following the same curriculum. Student progress in the core areas is rarely less than satisfactory overall and is often good.

As students move through the school their rate of progress increases. The attainment and progress of older girls is better when compared to boys in mathematics and English, as they respond to good quality teaching. Standards in Arabic and Islamic education are satisfactory. In Grades 1 to 3, students make good progress in producing accurate and neat Arabic writing. Although students in Islamic education develop good skills in reciting the Holy Qu'ran and in memorizing selected passages, most are not sufficiently challenged to excel. Students' attainment and progress in science is restricted by the limited opportunities available for them to undertake practical investigations. Students make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their use of the formal structures of the English language. There is insufficient time allocated to experiencing the richness of English literature. Most children in the KG are able to form letters and repeat their sounds. They make less progress in developing their ability to explore and make sense of their environment. Most students make reasonable progress in ICT. Attainment though is limited by a curriculum that does not offer sufficient relevance or challenge to the many students who are already computer literate. Games and physical education lessons are not based on a programme of skill development so many students make insufficient progress.

Students' personal development

The school provides a welcoming and happy environment. Staff and students enthusiastically rejoice at the achievement of others. Relationships between staff and students are relaxed and friendly and there is a strong community spirit. Attendance is consistently very good and regularly exceeds 97%. Students enjoy their studies and behave well in class although a small number of boys behave badly on those few occasions when classroom management is weak. Students are very active members of the learning groups in each class. They understand their roles and perform them, without having to be reminded, and they interact with each other in a calm and supportive manner. Students are well mannered and considerate towards others in the corridors as they move between classes.

Although most students can describe what a healthy lifestyle might involve, they do not think the school supports them in achieving it.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning remain satisfactory overall. The improvements made since the last inspection have not had sufficient impact across the school to raise teaching standards further. Teachers in all core subjects display good subject knowledge. They plan their lessons well and are careful to include a good range of different activities that interest and actively engage students. Teaching in KG is less well developed and teachers do not sufficiently plan to allow children to make choices about their activities or engage in imaginative play with their peers. Teachers use the available technology effectively to stimulate students' interest and to widen the curriculum available in the set texts.

Most lessons proceed at a good pace as teachers set clear times for the activities. Learning objectives are shared with students at the start of lessons; these are rarely used to check learning as the lesson progresses. Lessons often end abruptly so that students leave lessons unsure about what they have accomplished. Teachers establish good relationships with their students so that more timid students are able to provide answers to questions even when they are unsure.

Teachers are improving their skills in providing students with those activities that best suit their needs and abilities. Teachers understand that not all students are able to access the planned activities at the same level, and in many classes worksheets are set at three different levels of complexity to match broad bands of ability. Teachers do not dominate the lessons and use group work to set learners relevant tasks. Groups are often too large for each student to have a purposeful role that ensures they contribute effectively to the task.

Assessment of learning is unsatisfactory and most teachers have insufficient knowledge of the progress made by the students. Checks on learning through questioning and the use of peer and self-assessment are rarely used effectively. Students' books are marked regularly but the marking focuses almost solely on the accuracy of answers and whether the work set has been completed. In their marking, teachers do not identify additional areas that might extend learning or challenge more able students.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The school follows the UAE Ministry of Education Curriculum. The school's mission statement expresses its commitment to creativity and integrity, which it strives to achieve. The introduction of art into the curriculum since the last inspection has provided students with a broader range of learning experiences. The curriculum

implementation is successful in preparing those students who are able to move into higher education in their home countries or in the UAE. It is less successful in preparing students for the world of work or in developing their own gifts and talents.

The school successfully promotes the culture and values of the UAE in lessons. In one English lesson, a grade 10 boy showed his familiarity with the wisdom of Sheikh Zayed by correctly quoting, 'A nation without a past is a nation without a present or a future'. Students in grades 11 and 12 have insufficient opportunities to study ICT or take part in physical activities. The early learning curriculum provided in the KG does not give sufficient emphasis to the development of children's creative and social skills or allow them to make insightful choices about their activities.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school works hard to create a suitably caring environment and successfully supports students from many different cultures; in particular, the large number of students from Syria. The school has an effective child protection policy and procedures. Not all staff fully understand the practical implications of the policy. There is only one small clinic for over 2000 male and female students. It is not of a suitable size or adequately staffed to undertake the range of duties that are necessary. Procedures for monitoring and promoting student attendance are very effective, consequently attendance is consistently above 97% in most classes. Most students throughout the school appreciate the friendly and supportive relationships they have with teaching and administrative staff. There is insufficient structured and professional advice and guidance for students who are contemplating the next steps in their education or working life.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school's buildings and premises are satisfactory and provide students with a safe and secure learning environment. The school is aware of the need to expand and improve the accommodation and the construction of a new outside covered play and sports area is underway. The outside area for KG children has improved. The creation of specialist curriculum rooms for the core subjects has successfully enhanced student learning. There are clear arrangements in each section of the school in relation to emergency procedures. The school has an efficient, trained and well prepared emergency response team. Some classrooms, particularly in the KG, are cramped and restrict the range of active learning that can take place. There is very limited access for adults and students with restricted mobility to nearly all sections of the building. Despite work in the roads immediately

bordering the school, senior staff have developed effective strategies for keeping students safe as they enter and leave the school.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school has improved its resources for the teaching of ICT as well as some classroom technologies since the last inspection. The school has made a significant investment in classroom assistants for the KG. Their potential in supporting learning has not been properly realised. The school has recently purchased more up to date and challenging textbooks for most core subjects and these are of greater relevance to the lives of the students. There are insufficient practical resources in science to support investigative learning. There are very unsatisfactory library resources that do not encourage students to read for pleasure or allow them to undertake research. The school has sufficient staff to support the curriculum and they possess qualifications relevant to the subject they teach. The school matches the professional development requirements of staff to its own priorities that are focused on improving classroom practice. Most teachers benefit from this training. The school does not yet sufficiently measure the impact this has on students' learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The owner, principal and senior leaders in the school undertake their roles with commitment and enthusiasm. The owner and principal are fully aware of their relationship to the communities they serve and the responsibilities that attend that relationship. These inform their strategic direction and improvement priorities. The principal and senior leaders cultivate an ethos of mutual caring that permeates every area of school life. The owner and principal provide careful financial management that allows the school to improve its buildings and resources in a gradual, planned manner.

The self-evaluation process is not sufficiently rigorous so that the school does not fully understand what it does well and what needs improving. Senior leaders value the judgments and advice from external partners when setting the agenda for improvement. Access to performance data on all aspects of school life is adequate. Senior staff and teachers do not use this information in an effective manner to monitor the performance of individual students and groups of students or set targets for improvement. Parents are extremely supportive of the school however procedures for listening to the views of students are underdeveloped.

Overall, the school's commitment to improvement, together with a growing sense of confidence in the quality of the education provided, demonstrates a strong capacity to improve.

Progress since the last inspection

The owner, principal and staff at all levels are committed to raising the quality of education provided by the school. The school has recognised the need to raise standards and are seeing some success through improvements to the quality of teaching and learning. Since the last inspection, the number of children recently arrived from Syria has grown significantly and now accounts for 25% of the school's population. Nearly all these students have had a disrupted education and many have missed critical periods in their school career. The school has answered the need of this section of the community in commendable fashion. This has diverted the school's resources so that overall levels of progress and attainment are not improving as rapidly as they otherwise would have done. The school is currently extending its usable playground space and has made improvements to the physical environment for its youngest children.

The school has been eager to build on the improvements recognised in the previous inspection report. The use of ICT in classrooms is now well established and is successful in engaging the interest of learners. It has provided the necessary extension and enhancement of the curriculum not provided in students' textbooks. The introduction of specialist teaching bases for the core subjects has improved students' interest and motivation so that standards are gradually improving. The introduction of art into the curriculum has resulted in work of good quality and encouraged a few students to explore related vocational pathways.

Not all the recommendations in the previous inspection report have been addressed as successfully. Although there has been some improvement in the range and quantity of practical resources in the KG, staff do not yet fully match their teaching strategies to the ways that young children learn best. Limited practical resources in science, particularly for older students, reduces the quality of their curriculum experience and has a negative impact on their understanding of some scientific concepts.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Review the processes for self-evaluation so that:
 - i. the school uses a variety of evidence sources, including data on student performance, as part of the process when making judgments about grades
 - ii. the school adopts a more rigorous and challenging approach to lesson observations that takes more account of best practice and provides more detailed guidance on how to improve.
 2. Improve curriculum planning in the KG so that there are more opportunities for children to work independently and develop their creative, social, communication and problem solving skills.
 3. Provide older students with more personalised advice, guidance and work place experiences to match their future needs and aspirations.
 4. Cater for and more fully understand the abilities and interests of individual students so that:
 - i. more able students are challenged to extend and enhance their learning
 - ii. students who find learning difficult are provided with the appropriate learning activities that enable them to meet the lesson's learning objectives successfully
 - iii. all students are set targets for improvement and are supported in achieving those targets.
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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								