



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



Inspection Report

Belvedere British School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Belvedere British School

Inspection Date	26 – 29 May 2014
School ID#	222
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	667
Age Range	3 to 13 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Kellie Jepsen
School Address	Mohammed Bin Zayed City, Street 31, behind Al Safeer Mall, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (02) 509 0000
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Official Email (ADEC)	Belvedere.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	belvederebritishschool.com
Date of last inspection	17 – 20 March 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:

- staff and student morale have remained buoyant during a period of significant change
- the principal and administrative supervisor share a determination to improve the quality of education and have been instrumental in bringing about improvements to most performance standards
- the owners share the leadership's commitment to the school's improvement
- the introduction of thorough assessment and tracking systems enables the identification of students who are making more or less than the expected progress
- the school buildings are very clean and well maintained; they provide a bright and stimulating environment for learning.

The main areas for improvement are:

- standards in Arabic, Islamic education, social studies, English, science and information and communication technology (ICT)
- the progress students make in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies
- clarity in the roles of the middle leadership and management of individual subjects
- the development of an appreciation of the UAE's culture, heritage and values across the school
- attendance and punctuality to school.

Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors. They observed 64 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject leaders, teachers, support staff, students and parents. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, analysed 127 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the school's policies and other documents. The principal and senior leadership team were involved throughout the inspection process.

Description of the School

Belvedere British School opened in its current purpose built premises in September 2012. It is located in a developing residential area within Mohammed bin Zayed City and is around 30km from Abu Dhabi city centre.

The school is part of the Belvedere Group of three schools. The other two are preparatory and secondary schools in England. A Board oversees the development of the school. It comprises the chair of governors, principal, administration supervisor, assistant vice-principals and representatives of teachers and parents. The Principal has been in post since October 2012. The current school development partner has been working with the school for eight months.

The school aims include the intention to provide 'a creative, vibrant and academic education; one where expectations are high but aspirations for each and every child and young person are higher'.

The youngest children follow the English Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. They are assessed using the age-related 'Development Matters' criteria. Older students follow the English National Curriculum (ENC) and they undertake standardized ENC tests at the end of each term. This curriculum is supplemented by the statutory Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum for Arabic, Islamic education and social studies.

The number of students on roll has increased by almost 50% since the last inspection. 669 students are currently enrolled. There are 232 children in Foundation Stage, 386 in Years 1 to 5 and 51 in Years 6 to 8. 84% are Muslim, 55% are boys, 68% speak Arabic and 18% students speak English as first languages. The largest proportion of students is Emirati, representing 40% of the school enrolment Emiratis. Other main nationalities represented are Pakistanis 7%, Egyptian 6%, Jordanian 6% and Indian 5%, with other smaller proportions from other countries.

The school has identified 5 students as having special educational needs (SEN). Their main areas of need are behaviour and learning difficulties. Only 2 students are identified as having specific gifts or talents in mathematics and literacy.

Admission to the Foundation Stage (FS) is based upon interview, the attendance of siblings and the availability of space in the school. Older students are admitted subject to the successful completion of the age-appropriate standardised tests in English and mathematics. The school admits students of all abilities.

Annual fees range from AED 23,000 in Foundation Stage to AED 26,500 in Year 8, exclusive of visits, lunch, transport and uniform. This is in the high category.

The school was previously inspected in March 2013 and also received a monitoring visit in October 2013.

The Effectiveness of the School

While this report recognises the improvement achieved since the last inspection, 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 are unsatisfactory. (Refer to Irtiqa'a Framework, 'Limiting Judgements' page 15.)

Students' attainment & progress

Attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Students are starting to make more progress but they do not achieve in line with their peers following either the same curriculum or international expectations. The school is expanding rapidly and students join with a wide range of educational experiences and backgrounds. Effective systems for assessing students' work have only been in place during the current academic year. The school analyses the available information thoroughly to monitor attainment and the progress made by individual students.

School data indicate that children enter FS as beginners in English and their development in other areas is below age related expectations. Inspection evidence shows they make satisfactory progress and leave FS with skills that are average in mathematics and social development but remain below expectations in English and Arabic.

Overall entry standards for those joining older year groups range from just below average in Year 1 to low in Year 8. Students make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology (ICT). Standards remain below average in all these subjects, except mathematics, which is average. Students make unsatisfactory progress in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies and standards in these subjects are below expectations.

Students find it difficult to think their way around problems. Their ability to read the Holy Qur'an and Arabic text using the 'Tashkeel' rules of grammar is weak. In addition, they find it hard to discuss Islamic issues and demonstrate suitable application of these values in their daily lives. Students make satisfactory progress in other subjects such as physical education and music.

Students' personal development

Personal development is satisfactory and improving. During most of the lessons, students behave sensibly and value each other's contributions. Students enjoy coming to school and respect the school buildings. Children in FS are curious about the world and are confident about experiencing new things. They willingly take turns and make choices. Older students have a positive attitude to learning and speak highly of the time and effort taken by their teachers to help them learn. Working relationships are good and students are pleased with the way their school is improving. Some become frustrated when their learning is held back by less motivated classmates or when those who wear untidy uniforms fail to espouse the values of the school. Students agree behaviour deteriorates during some lessons, particularly in subjects taught in Arabic, which they sometimes find rather dull.

The school nurse contributes to students' satisfactory understanding about the importance of leading a healthy life style. There is very little bullying and occasional incidents that occur out of school, including cyber bullying in social media, are managed effectively. The attendance at 91% during the current academic year is average; it is unsatisfactory for children in FS and Year 1 and higher in the older years. Punctuality at the start of the school day is weak; assembly is interrupted by the late arrival of students who walk across the platform to join their classes.

Students enjoy participating in extra-curricular activities, such as the mathematics or ICT club. They are disappointed that others, such as cheerleading, have stopped. Students are also developing team working skills through reading with younger students, the Young Leaders schemes or raising funds for Red Crescent.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, and is now satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was highly variable ranging from very unsatisfactory to outstanding. The most effective teaching was seen in English and mathematics, and the least effective in the subjects taught in Arabic. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and their teaching methods interest and motivate the majority of students. The extent

to which teaching assistants are used to support learning during lessons is variable.

In the best lessons, teachers manage behaviour well, provide regular opportunities for students to develop their spoken English and play an active role in their learning. The most effective teachers use well-targeted questions to probe students' understanding and clearly explain each lesson's learning objectives and success criteria. This helps students to understand the purpose of the activities and subsequently judge the extent to which they have acquired the intended skills and knowledge. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics and science. For example, during a Year 2 science lesson, students designed an investigation into how far a car would travel on various surfaces. They thought analytically, formed hypotheses, and understood if and why these would be correct or incorrect. In the best lessons, teachers develop students' vocabulary and use everyday objects to illustrate the difference between, for example, 'smooth', 'slippery' and 'soft'. Teachers work hard and expect students to do the same.

In the less successful lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able. There are also few opportunities for discussion, for students to think for themselves or learn independently. In these lessons, learning is based on the acquisition of knowledge, not understanding. As a result, students cannot talk about the significance of what they have learned and cannot apply their learning to their daily lives.

Comprehensive assessment systems are now in place for English, mathematics, science, physical education and ICT. Senior and middle leaders use data from the termly examinations to track students' progress over the medium term and identify those who are making more or less than expected progress. Most of the teachers continually assess gains in students' knowledge and understanding during lessons and know how well each individual is progressing. Professional development is effective and all students have individual targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science. Students know the level at which they are working, their target level, and what they have to do to reach it. The administration supervisor has also devised level descriptors for Arabic. These are included in students' termly reports; they are not referred to during lessons. Individual targets for improvement are not provided in subjects that are taught in Arabic and so students do not know how to raise the standard of their work.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation and delivery of the curriculum have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Students with SEN and the more able are now identified and individual education plans are in place for each student. The

success of this system is reflected in their satisfactory progress. Rotas ensure contingency teaching cover and lessons are no longer cancelled as a result of staff absences.

The delivery of curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced. Class sizes are small and provide the opportunity for teachers to provide an individualized approach to the curriculum. The ENC programmes of study provide clearly defined learning outcomes and a review has led to improvements in continuity and progression in most subjects. In FS to Year 5, learning is delivered through a series of topics; this approach is successful in making learning relevant to students' lives. For example, the FS topic of 'Treasure' provides exciting opportunities for children to learn through exploration and develop their vocabulary through role-play. The extent to which activities within the classroom and outdoors provide opportunities for FS children to learn through making choices, active investigation and problem solving is satisfactory. Curriculum time allocated to English is supplemented each day by reading and spelling activities undertaken during form time. There are insufficient opportunities for students of all ages to develop their spoken English.

The extent to which the curriculum develops students' understanding of UAE family and community values is unsatisfactory. There are no displays of heritage or culture around the school. The range of additional activities is satisfactory. Students can choose from lunchtime Holy Qur'an reading and recitation groups and the science club. Students also develop their skills and physical fitness through lunchtime sports clubs and national competitions such as Spelling Bee.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The quality of educational and pastoral care is now satisfactory and improving. The school provides a calm and positive environment; security is good and students feel safe and well cared for. Procedures to manage behaviour are implemented fairly and physical or verbal bullying is rare. The school takes appropriate action to counter occasional incidents of cyber bullying. Since the last inspection, the school has reviewed the pastoral system. It is now more structured with each student having a form tutor, with a senior leader monitoring overall provision. This effectiveness of this system is reflected in students' satisfactory personal development and steady progress in their work. Students of all abilities, including those with SEN and gifts and talents receive satisfactory personal and academic support.

Procedures for the recruitment of staff are thorough and the necessary checks are undertaken and recorded. Child protection procedures are clear. The school clinic is clean and there are good arrangements for the administration of first aid

and the dispensing of medicines. The school is working to improve students' attendance and punctuality. Individuals and classes with good attendance receive congratulatory certificates. The school has also moved Golden Time, trips and project work to Thursday afternoons and the last week of term in order to encourage students to attend.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The premises are clean and well maintained and all the required health and safety checks are undertaken. Since the last inspection, the school has provided a second purpose built science laboratory and a new ICT suite. Space within the latter and the library is limited when used by larger classes. A lift to the first floor and ramps within the building ensure students with physical difficulties have good access to all areas. Classrooms are of a suitable size and there are satisfactory facilities for practical activities such as science, art, music and ICT. Vibrant displays feature numerous examples of student's work and promote learning effectively. Only a few FS classrooms have access to toilets from within the classroom and none lead directly onto the outdoor areas. There is sufficient outdoor space; large canopies provide shade to the spacious assembly area and there is also a fenced court with artificial grass surface.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school is adequately resourced and there are sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers and other staff. Many teachers are in the first few years of their careers and lack experience. Effective professional development is successfully developing their skills in key areas. This includes, for example, teaching strategies for those learning English as an additional language and the analysis and constructive use of assessment information.

The range of non-fiction and research books continue to expand and funds are allocated for the imminent purchase of additional books for the library. There are sufficient ICT resources to support learning. Teachers regularly use interactive white boards and projectors during lessons and there is internet access throughout the school.

There is a suitable range of other day-to-day resources within classrooms as well as specialist areas, such as science, art and music. Sports facilities are unsatisfactory. There is no full size football pitch or indoor gymnasium that older students can use during hot weather.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The principal provides focused and effective leadership. She is highly regarded by parents and almost all of those who returned their inspection questionnaire believe that the principal and leadership team do an effective job. The principal works closely with the administrative supervisor and their very thorough analysis of performance data is helping them to monitor overall standards and progress very closely. Their energy and enthusiasm has spearheaded the drive for improvement and they are successful in communicating their vision to the school community. Their clear sense of purpose has inspired everyone to pull together in order to bring about change. Other members of the senior leadership provide good support and advice on areas such as the Arabic curriculum, health and safety and pastoral care. Effective professional development for middle leaders and teachers is closely linked to the school's priorities and is successfully developing their skills. This is clearly reflected in improvements to the overall quality of education provided. There has yet to be a significant rise in academic standards.

The self-evaluation form (SEF) was reviewed just before the inspection. All members of staff contributed to its completion and judgments within are largely accurate. The comprehensive school development plan (SDP) reflects the main issues identified in the SEF. The goals are relevant and are shared with parents. The budget is carefully managed and funding is aligned with the school's strategic priorities.

There is insufficient continuity within the school regarding the leadership and management of phases and key subjects. For example, there are separate leaders for FS1 and FS2 and numerous individuals are responsible for managing individual subjects across the school. This also reduces the continuity with which individual departments monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

Progress since the last inspection

There have been improvements to most performance standards since the last inspection and most of the issues raised by the last inspection have been successfully tackled. There have been improvements to the quality of teaching, personal development, protection, care and guidance and leadership and management. The introduction of thorough procedures for analysing assessment information is enabling senior leaders to more effectively monitor educational outcomes and support individuals.

A Board was established at the start of the year and its role is still evolving. The owners employ an independent consultant to visit the school regularly from England. He reports to the Board, advises senior leaders and quality assures key

aspects of provision, such as implementation of policies and the quality of teaching. In this way, the Board and owners obtain a fully objective view of the school and senior leaders benefit from the counsel of an impartial, experienced advisor. The Principal also welcomes advice provided by the school development partner.

Many of these changes have been introduced over the last 12 months and are still bedding down. Teaching has recently improved but is not consistent enough to have had a significant impact on raising academic standards sufficiently. The school is aware that there is still some way to go regarding the consistent delivery of teaching and ensuring students' satisfactory progress in the subjects taught in Arabic. Overall, the school has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise standards and accelerate students' progress in key subjects by:
 - i. improving the quality of teachers' verbal feedback during lessons and ensuring that written feedback is acted upon by students to improve their work
 - ii. ensuring teachers have consistently high expectations of students' performance, especially the more able
 - iii. providing more opportunities for developing students' higher order thinking, enquiry and research skills
 - iv. provide training and sharing the existing good practice regarding the effective use of support staff during lessons.
2. improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - i. establishing a structure that ensures continuity of leadership of key subjects across the school
 - ii. providing high quality training in leadership and management skills
 - iii. monitoring the impact of leadership on student' progress and personal development.
3. Improve students' attendance and their punctuality by:
 - i. establishing a more robust and responsive system for monitoring and promoting daily attendance
 - ii. taking every opportunity to emphasise the importance of regular attendance to parents and students.
4. Improve students' understanding of the UAE's culture, heritage and values both during lessons and across the school environment.

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								