



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



# New School Inspection Report

Brighton College Al Ain (Bloom Gardens)

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Brighton College Al Ain (Bloom Gardens)

|                              |                                                                              |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection Date</b>       | 18 – 20 May 2014                                                             |
| <b>School ID#</b>            | 234                                                                          |
| <b>Licensed Curriculum</b>   | English National Curriculum                                                  |
| <b>Number of Students</b>    | 225                                                                          |
| <b>Age Range</b>             | 3 to 14 years                                                                |
| <b>Gender</b>                | Mixed                                                                        |
| <b>Principal</b>             | Alun Yorath                                                                  |
| <b>School Address</b>        | Zakher, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi                                                    |
| <b>Telephone Number</b>      | +971 (0)3 713 3999                                                           |
| <b>Fax Number</b>            | +971 (0)3 713 3999                                                           |
| <b>Official Email (ADEC)</b> | <a href="mailto:Bloom.gardens@adec.ac.ae">Bloom.gardens@adec.ac.ae</a>       |
| <b>School Website</b>        | <a href="http://www.brightoncollegealain.ae">www.brightoncollegealain.ae</a> |
| <b>Date of opening</b>       | September 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: | <b>BAND A;</b> | <b>GRADE 2</b> |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|

### The main strengths of the school are:

- students thoroughly enjoy their time at school and are very proud to be students of Brighton College
- behaviour is exemplary and students show a high level of respect to others
- there is a strong ethos of pastoral care and the school treats every student as a valued individual
- the extensive range of extra-curricular activities available helps broaden students' experiences
- students make very effective progress because teachers make lessons interesting and exciting for them
- staff are appreciative of the range of professional development offered to them and morale is very high
- senior leaders have made an extremely positive impact in a very short time

### The main areas for improvement are:

- developing the tracking system in the junior school
- creating more outdoor shaded spaces
- developing more opportunities in lessons for students to make links with life in the UAE.

## Introduction

---

The school was inspected by 3 inspectors. They observed 39 lessons, attended registration and tutor groups and observed lunch and break times. They conducted several meetings with the College Leadership Team (CLT) other senior staff, a governor representative, teachers, students and parents. They spoke to students throughout their time in school. They looked at assessment results and scrutinised students' work across the school. They considered the 19 responses to the parents' questionnaire about the school and many of the school's policy and other documents. The headmaster and 2 heads of school were involved throughout the inspection process. The heads of school and their deputies completed lesson observations jointly with the team.

## Description of the School

---

Brighton College Al Ain opened in September 2013 in purpose-built accommodation. Students entered from a wide range of other schools in Al Ain and other parts of the UAE. 27 students entered from schools overseas. The school's vision is: 'to become the first choice British curriculum school in Al Ain for children aged 3 to 18 years and be internationally recognised as a leading British Curriculum school in the Middle East'. The school's mission is 'to turn out well-educated, tolerant and intellectually curious men and women who are ready to take a full, active and positive role in the life of Al Ain, the UAE and our world. We support children to achieve their very best by creating an ethos of excellence in all that we do through a traditional yet innovative curriculum and outstanding pastoral provision'. Its overarching aim is 'to create a family-orientated, tolerant and vibrant community'.

Of the 225 students on roll there are 57 children in the foundation stage (FS), 91 students in primary (years 1 to 5) and 77 in the senior years (years 6 to 9). There are 123 boys and 102 girls. Students from FS1 to year 4 are based in the junior school and students in years 5 to 9 are based in separate buildings for boys and girls. 61% of students are Emirati, 17% are British, 4% are American, 4% are Jordanian and 3% are South African. The other 11% are from a range of different nationalities. 77% of students are Muslim and 68% are of Arabic heritage. The school has identified 26 students as having special educational needs (SEN) and 28 as being gifted and talented (G and T). Additionally, 34 students are designated to be in the early stages of learning English as an additional language (EAL). The school is academically selective and students from year 2 onwards are formally assessed before entry to ensure the school can meet their needs. A number of scholarships are offered for academic, sporting, music, academic and all-round performance.

The College leadership team comprises the headmaster, heads of junior and senior schools and the bursar. Each school also has its own leadership team. Fees range from AED 47,530 for FS1 to AED 61,640 for year 9.

The school is owned by Bloom Education, and is in partnership with Brighton College International. The governing body is shared with Brighton College, Abu Dhabi and has representatives from the UK and the UAE.

## **The Effectiveness of the School**

---

The new leadership team has made a highly effective start on guiding the school towards meeting its mission and aspirational aims. After two terms it is already meeting many of them; for example many students already have developed ‘a love of learning for its own sake’ and students say that they feel that ‘every individual is valued equally’. This report seeks to acknowledge what has already been achieved by the school and gives a small number of recommendations for further improvement.

### **Students’ attainment & progress**

Students joined the school with a range of experiences, skills and abilities. The majority of students entered the junior school working well below the English National Curriculum (ENC) expectations for their age. In 2 terms students have made rapid progress and many are currently working within age-related expectations. Some are now working above this. Children in the FS make accelerated progress in their English, mathematics and Arabic skills. They can talk confidently about the instructions they have followed, for example, how to make a pizza, and can write their names and can blend letters together to make words. They can count accurately and some can combine 2 numbers together to find a total. Older students in years 1 to 4 make very effective progress in the core subjects. By year 4, strong progress is evident as students are able to use multiplication tables to find division facts, and can write creatively and at length. Students use English confidently in conversations and ably use information and communication technology (ICT).

The majority of students entered the senior school working broadly within expected national curriculum levels, with some working below, particularly in English. Rapid progress means that most are now working above age-related expectations, particularly in English, mathematics, science and ICT. By year 9, students are able to critically analyse an extract from a novel in English, can explain the frequency and wavelengths of electro-magnetic waves. Year 8 students were observed using graphics programs and creating animated logos very successfully. This shows accelerated progress. Students make exceptional

progress in their development of higher order skills, such as problem solving, investigating and thinking critically.

Students make effective progress in their Islamic education. The youngest students know about the prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and his family. Senior school students talk knowledgeably about the conquest of Makkah and the reasons for that. They clearly understand how to link the Islamic values to their daily lives. Progress in Arabic for non-native speakers consistently exceeds expectations. There are some inconsistencies in the progress in Arabic for native speakers. The school is well aware of this and has already moved swiftly to address this. Progress in social studies is above average. High standards are reached by students in a range of other subjects such as music, art, drama and sport.

The school has not yet participated in any UK national tests and the first year group of students will sit International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations in the summer of 2016. Year 9 students are currently working with IGCSE criteria and predictions are that the majority will receive A and A\* grades in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The senior school's tracking system is extremely robust, with students assessed regularly and any lack of progress swiftly dealt with through additional booster classes. A tracking system is in place in the junior school and regular standardised testing takes place. The school is aware that this system is not yet sufficiently well developed to closely track the progress of students working below national curriculum levels.

### **Students' personal development**

The school is a harmonious community with students showing high levels of respect to one another. Students are very confident, enjoy school life and say they are proud to belong to Brighton College. They are almost always highly engaged in lessons and say that this is because teachers make the lessons so interesting for them. Behaviour in classes and around the school is exemplary. Older students show high levels of motivation and perseverance. All students participate in a range of extra-curricular activities and say how much they enjoy these. Students' leadership and independence skills are developed very effectively throughout the school, for example FS1 children wash their own utensils, and older students give presentations to their class or tutor group. Older students readily help younger ones in house events and tutor groups. Students appreciate the student forum sessions, where they can air problems and give their views. Skills in working with partners or as part of a group are developed in all lessons and consequently these skills are well developed. In many lessons, students are asked to give reasons, explain their answers and make predictions. Students have an age-appropriate

understanding of UAE values and its culture. The school has not yet had time to enable students to make links with, and contribute to, the local community.

### **The quality of teaching and learning**

Teachers have worked very hard to set up their classrooms, establish clear routines and settle students into their new school. The school uses a creative approach to teaching and learning, with ICT used in most lessons. Teachers have high expectations and robust subject knowledge. They are committed to making lessons exciting and always interesting for students. A 'hook' is identified on all plans to draw students into the learning. This could be a letter from 'Traction Man' asking year 1 to help him, the use of a video clip, or using a tunnel to enter a 'dangerous land'. Teaching is imaginative and a wide range of strategies and methods are used. Teachers are skilled at segmenting lessons so students always have a range of activities, such as paired work, use of ICT and group work.

Lesson plans are very well developed. A consistent approach is used across the school and all plans contain different activities matched to different needs. Much planning is personalised, with student initials indicating particular strategies to be used with individual students. This makes a significant impact on students' progress. Students with SEN, G and T and EAL needs all have targets within each lesson plan. The high ratio of adults to students means that students benefit from much individual attention. The teachers for SEN and EAL work effectively in classes to support students. Other support staff are very well deployed to make an impact on students' learning.

Teachers emphasise to students what it is they will be learning and how they can succeed. Even in the junior school students are able to think of their own success criteria and ably peer- and self-assess. Sometimes the written success criteria given to students are not written simply enough for EAL learners. A full range of assessment is used and marking gives students clear targets on how they can further improve. Teachers miss some opportunities to make links in lessons with life in the UAE by, for example, using dirhams instead of sterling pound currency.

### **Meeting students' needs through the curriculum**

The breadth of the curriculum is a significant strength of the school, particularly in the senior school. The ENC is enhanced with swimming and drama in the junior school and subjects such as Mandarin, and Spanish in the senior school. The senior school students also study 'The Story of Our Land', which enables them to develop an understanding of aspects of the UAE, such as its geography and history. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is a strong feature of the school's provision. Students say they feel they are developing useful life skills during these lessons. The curriculum is highly effective in motivating students and

equipping them with the necessary skills and personal qualities they will need in their future lives. The detailed curriculum planning for students with additional needs contributes to their rapid progress.

The school offers a wealth of extra-curricular activities, ranging from cooking in the FS to surfing and scuba-diving in the senior school. Students say how much they appreciate the range of activities on offer and how they contribute to their wider view of the world. Long- and medium-term curriculum plans do not yet identify opportunities for teachers to make links in lessons between the English national curriculum and the UAE.

### **The protection, care, guidance and support of students**

An extremely strong ethos of care has been created in the school. Relationships are strong and students say they can talk to many adults in the school if they have concerns. Parents say that teachers know their children very well as individuals and that their children are nurtured. The very cohesive house system is also appreciated by parents and students alike. They feel that it instils a feeling of belonging and creates bonds between older and younger students. Students' personal development is very carefully tracked and interventions are put in place very quickly when needed.

Robust systems are in place for safeguarding students. A wide variety of risk assessments, policies and systems keep students safe. There is good first-aid provision throughout the school. Attendance and punctuality data is regularly analysed so that improvements can be made. This has resulted in a rise in attendance this term to 95%. The school is focused on sustaining this recent rise in attendance.

A very effective age-appropriate rewards and sanctions system is in place which is fully understood by the students. The youngest students understand the expectations for behaviour and why their photograph will be moved away from 'Mr Happy'. Older students understand the four stages of the behaviour management system. Students say that any rare instances of unkindness are dealt with very swiftly. Clear systems are in place for the identification of and support for students with additional needs.

### **The quality of the school's buildings and premises**

The school is an impressive design with high quality specialist facilities and classrooms. The quality of the facilities impacts very positively on students' learning. Superb facilities, such as the sports hall and swimming pool, contribute very effectively to students' indoor physical education (PE) and games. A full size athletics track is well used in the winter months. An insufficient number of shaded

outdoor areas limits outdoor PE and games, particularly in the summer months. Senior students say they would like to be able to use outdoor spaces for recreation, but these are not currently available. Outdoor learning in the junior school is also limited by the lack of sufficient shaded areas.

Stimulating learning environments have been created across the school which help to encourage learning. Vibrant displays in most areas successfully celebrate student achievement. Students are responsible for generating some of the displays and those in the Mural Club are decorating corridor walls with their own designs. School buildings are kept spotlessly clean. Security is extremely vigilant in all parts of the school.

### **The school's resources to support its aims**

The school has an extensive range of resources to support students' learning and well-being. These are very well used by teachers in most lessons. Particularly good use is made of ICT resources, such as interactive boards, to motivate, engage and challenge students. The extensive resources available in specialist rooms, such as science labs and music rooms, contribute notably to students' progress. The wide range of resources used in a year 7 science lesson enabled students to understand how electrical energy works in the inner ear. The high ratio of adults to students in the school means that students benefit from a very effective level of personal and individual attention.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Governors and senior leaders have a very clear vision for the school and this is shared by all staff. Morale is high and a positive team spirit has been established. Robust systems and procedures are in place, and are well understood by staff, students and parents. Very useful handbooks reinforce clear systems and protocols. Much hard work was done by senior leaders and senior staff long before the school opened to ensure effective systems and structures were in place. These are regularly reviewed to ensure they are working successfully. A highly vigilant approach to students' health, safety and well-being is in place.

The school's self-evaluation (SEF) is extremely accurate, with clearly identified strengths and areas to develop. The school development plan (SDP) is a true working document, with new targets replacing those that have been achieved. Key priorities identified are very appropriate and well-targeted to the needs of a start-up school.

A professional development review system is in place which acts as the school's appraisal system. This is highly developed, ensuring that staff are monitored, both formally and informally, and are given clear development targets. Staff say how

much they appreciate this system. They are also very appreciative of the extensive opportunities given for professional development. This is carefully linked to both the needs of individuals and the school's priorities. Staff in the Arabic department are extremely grateful for all the additional support and training given to them by the heads of school recently. Training linked to improving teaching and learning, such as assessment for learning and independence in learning, have already impacted on the quality of teaching. Scaffolds and prompts, such as 'The Grid of Excellence' further develop teachers' understanding of what an effective lesson looks like.

The wide range of monitoring activities, together with a detailed analysis of data, means that school leaders know their school very well. The CLT work very well together and are actively developing middle managers within both schools. Five current staff have been appointed to take up deputy or assistant head positions in September 2014.

Although only a small number of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire, inspectors met parents, both formally and informally. Almost all were positive about the school and praised the care their children receive. They appreciate the way that teachers keep in close contact with them by e-mail, to give them information about their child's progress. The formal parents' forum, the Friends of Brighton College is in the early stages of being developed.

Governors are already experienced since they are the same body that runs Brighton College, Abu Dhabi. Although there has only been one full governing body meeting to date, the Finance and Education Committee have met frequently. Governors are also in daily contact with the headmaster and bursar. Brighton College UK also makes an active contribution to the management and development of the school.

### **Capacity for further development**

---

The CLT and the governing body show an exceptionally strong capacity to develop the school even further and fulfil its ambitious aims. The 5 year strategic plan is fully costed, including finances to further develop the site. This includes an additional building to house the sixth form. Staffing needs for the future have already been considered. The school is very well prepared to implement all future plans.

### **What the school should do to improve further:**

---

1. Develop the tracking system in the junior school to more clearly demonstrate the progress made by those students working below English national curriculum levels.
2. Create more outdoor shaded places for outdoor learning, recreation and PE lessons.
3. Develop more opportunities across the curriculum for students to make links with life in the UAE.

## Inspection Grades

|                                                                    | Band A<br>High performing |           |      | Band B<br>Satisfactory   |              | Band C<br>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             |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |