



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



Inspection Report

The Cambridge High School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

The Cambridge High School

Inspection Date	10 – 13 November 2013
School ID#	045
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum (modified)
Number of Students	1731
Age Range	3 – 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Peter Lugg
School Address	PO Box 27602, Abu Dhabi 63 rd . Street, Mussafah, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 552 1621
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Official Email (ADEC)	Cambridgehigh.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.gemscis-abudhabi.com
Date of last inspection	28 – 31 May 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 A;	GRADE 3
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The main strengths of the school are:

- standards in IGCSE, AS and A level are significantly above best international standards
- the very strong ethos in which students are very well cared for and develop extremely strong personal qualities
- the curriculum is outstanding at instilling in students an understanding of UAE values, culture and society
- the extremely wide and diverse range of extra-curricular activities which enhance and enrich students' learning, cultural and sporting development.

The main areas for improvement are:

- full implementation of rigorous systems to monitor both the quality of teaching and to track students' academic progress
- provision of consistent individualised support for students with special educational needs (SEN)
- the quality of learning in Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies as it does not match that of other subjects.

Introduction

The school was inspected by a team of 5 inspectors. They observed 84 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, coordinators, heads of department (HODs), teachers, support staff, students and the owner's representative. They analysed student performance data, scrutinised written work across the school, analysed 532 responses to the parents' questionnaire about the school and considered many of the school's policies and other documents.

Description of the School

The Cambridge High School opened as a villa school in 1988 and moved to its current premises in Mussafah, Abu Dhabi, in 1995. It is part of the GEMS group with specific aims to develop student's leadership qualities, ambitions, awareness of global citizenship and universal values such as integrity and helping others, irrespective of their background.

The principal joined the school in 2001 when there were 420 students on roll. There are now 1731 students, with 910 boys and 821 girls. There are 220 children in the Foundation Stage, 380 in KS1, 379 in KS2, and 752 in KS3 – 5, of which 394 are boys and 358 are girls. There are more than 70 nationalities represented in the school; 32% of students are Arab, including 13% who are Emirati. Almost 70% of students are Muslim and 18% Christian.

The school identifies 9 students as having SEN, including autism, dyspraxia, Asperger syndrome, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The school does not have a SEN coordinator; an appointment was made during the inspection and the teacher will take up post in January 2014. The school has 2 specialist English support teachers to cater for students who have English as an additional language (EAL).

The school is highly oversubscribed but does not use entrance examinations except for when students enter the secondary school from other schools. Most families are from professional backgrounds. Fees range from AED 13,438 to AED 28,380 per annum.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

Standards in IGCSE, AS level and A level courses in all subjects are significantly above international best expectations and show an improving trend since 2009. All students at the school are learning English as an additional language and most enter the Foundation Stage with very limited, or no, English. They make significant gains in speaking and listening skills in English. This progress continues throughout the school so that students become extremely articulate and confident when providing answers, explaining their thoughts or leading assemblies. These gains in confidence mean that students' progress accelerates as they move through the school.

Progress in English and mathematics throughout the school is very good and standards are well above age related expectations. Standards in science are above the expectation. Students gain knowledge, but get insufficient opportunity to develop scientific enquiry and investigational skills. Standards in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are variable because, in some cases activities limit the development of higher level thinking and creativity. Students' performance and progress in Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies are in line with ADEC's expectations in lower grades. They are below expectations in higher grades. This is mainly because students gain knowledge but do not develop higher order skills, and resources are not used effectively to support learning.

Students' personal development

Students' personal development is outstanding in almost every aspect. They are a credit to the school and to themselves. They enjoy school, are proud of it and speak very highly of the positive relationships with their peers and teachers. Attendance is good at 93%. They show respect for the values and diverse cultures of the UAE. Behaviour is often exemplary and most students have very positive attitudes to learning. Amicable relationships exist between students from different backgrounds. Students make a very positive contribution in almost all assemblies, showing maturity and confidence when speaking or singing. Almost all students participate in a very wide range of after school activities. Students have had great success in sporting events and tournaments, including winning trophies for soccer, cricket, rugby, basketball and hockey. They willingly take part in external student organisations such as the Model United Nations and Face to Faith. They participate in a range of visits to other countries to support organisations such as Mother Theresa's hospital in India. The school successfully develops students' leadership qualities and they play an active role in the School Council. Students make a very good contribution to school life in many ways, such

as helping younger students and raising money to support breast cancer research.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and ensure that learning is accurate. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers usually share the lesson objectives with students so that the learning expectations are clear. Planning does not consistently cater sufficiently for the needs of different groups of students, especially those who find learning difficult. Strong relationships between teachers and students are reflective of mutual trust and respect. These underpin students' extremely good behaviour and attitudes to learning in most lessons.

Teachers effectively use questions that involve and engage many of the students. At best they use questions that probe students' critical thinking and help them to improve their higher order skills and understanding. Examples of this type of high quality learning were seen in English, mathematics and science lessons. Students increasingly benefit from this approach, but it is not consistently applied in all lessons. This is especially so when teachers provide too much explanation and ask questions that are closed and require only factual or superficial answers. Teachers provide too much direction in Arabic and Islamic studies. This limits progress, the effective development of basic skills and opportunities for students to explain their ideas in depth. Students make exceptional progress when lessons proceed at a brisk pace, teachers have high expectations and activities enable students to work independently or collaboratively.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The curriculum follows the British National Curriculum for most subjects and the Ministry of Education curriculum for Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies. It is broad and balanced. It offers a diverse range of subjects, especially at IGCSE, AS and A level. It meets the learning needs of students in most areas and enables them to develop very strong personal skills.

Students gain a very strong understanding and respect for the values and different cultures in the UAE through assemblies, plays, lessons, celebrations throughout the year, international visits and visitors to the school. This is an outstanding feature of the curriculum. Emirati students take responsibility for organising the National Day activities and edit an Arabic magazine. A very high number of students participate in a wide range of activities that enrich their experience culturally, artistically and through sport. The wider curriculum provides students with many opportunities to extend their skills and enhance their learning through links with local and international organisations. Students benefit from work experience opportunities with local banks, hospitals and businesses as well as helping younger students in the school. The curriculum

provision for Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies is insufficiently developed to ensure standards and progress match that of other subjects.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate the quality of care that it provides so that their child feels safe and happy in school. There is a very strong ethos and the school provides students with a warm and very positive environment. The very good level of care for students is reflected in the high quality of personal skills that students develop. Adults are plentiful in corridors and in social areas at break time to keep students safe. The school has effective procedures to monitor students' academic and personal development.

The school behaviour policy is clear and classroom management strategies are very effective, resulting in highly motivated and interested students. Bullying is not an issue in the school and corporal punishment is forbidden. The school has very effective systems to ensure that child protection and safeguarding policies are fully implemented. It keeps a central register with all the required information to ensure that all adults in the school are suitably checked to work with children. The clinic is fit for purpose and the nurse and her assistant are suitably qualified. Medicines and student records are stored securely. Students consider that the school prepares them well for their future. Attendance is 93% and the school follows up any absenteeism rigorously. The English support teachers provide very good support for students at an early stage of learning English. The school has a prayer room that is mainly used by boys, but girls have access. Appropriate procedures for evacuation in case of emergency are in place.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The buildings and premises are clean, safe and well maintained. The school maintains electrical and safety equipment regularly. Most classrooms are small and space is tight for the number of students. Teachers work hard to use the space as effectively as they can to provide a good standard of student learning and implement the curriculum. The school has a wide range of specialist facilities for science, music, art, IT and PE enabling it to provide a broad curriculum. The all weather pitch has been replaced since the previous inspection and plans are in place for new buildings, including a sports hall.

Security guards ensure that the site is secure and CCTV monitors indoor and outdoor areas. The school has two libraries, one for primary and the other for secondary students. Outdoor spaces are adequate and the main quadrangle has been covered since the previous inspection. There are 2 canteens that are clean and hygienic. The school has rigorous procedures to ensure that the premises are healthy, safe and maintained in good condition. The school has ramps on the

ground floor to enable access by students with physical disabilities. There is not a lift to upper floors, but the school arranges classes on the ground floor if there is a need.

The school's resources to support its aims

The school has sufficient teachers who are suitably qualified to teach their subjects. The number of computers in school has increased significantly and this now enables students to access new technology to support their learning. Facilities for outdoor sport have been enhanced by the recent replacement of artificial grass to enable students to develop their skills and gain success in tournaments. The basketball court has a concrete surface that is uneven in places. The auditorium provides an adequate facility for indoor activities. The 2 libraries have a rich and diverse selection of books, but the range of Arabic books is limited. The 3 science laboratories are well resourced and hazardous materials are stored safely. Science is often taught in classrooms. The size of most classrooms limits practical work but teachers still try to enable students to use resources despite the difficulties. The ICT laboratories have sufficient computers and the school has 27 smart boards to support teaching and learning. Buses are maintained regularly and are suitably supervised.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school effectively meets the core aims of the GEMS group due to good leadership and management. The school very effectively develops students' leadership skills, universal values such as integrity and helping others, ambition and global awareness.

The cohesion within the senior leadership team is a real strength. The principal is pivotal and he is well supported by other senior staff. They have created an extremely positive and welcoming ethos that enables students to develop into mature, sensible, well - rounded and confident individuals. All staff in the school take an active role in school evaluation and future planning. The distribution of leadership roles means that responsibilities are shared and staff have clear roles. All staff share the vision and ambition for improvement and morale is high. Senior leaders are very visible in the school and students certainly appreciate the level of care, attention and support they receive.

School self - evaluation provides leaders with an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaker areas. The School Development Plan focuses on the recommendations from previous inspections as well as identifying other key areas for improvement based on internal monitoring. School leaders have addressed many of the recommendations from the previous inspection. They have started to

monitor the quality of teaching, but the impact is slow, as the systems are not fully implemented. The school has data systems for assessing students' progress, but leaders do not consistently evaluate progress at class, individual and group levels. The school finances are well managed. GEMS allocate a line manager for the school and he has good awareness of the schools' strengths and areas for improvement. GEMS holds the school to account effectively through regular meetings with the Principal.

Progress since the last inspection

Senior leaders have addressed many of the recommendations from the previous report. The system for lesson observations is more robust with senior and / or middle leaders carrying out regular observations and providing feedback to teachers. Middle leaders have developed strategies for improving student progress. All teaching staff have received updated laptops, 12 more interactive boards have been added, 120 laptops are available on trolleys and three computer labs are equipped with 30 computers. The all – weather pitch has been re-surfaced. The school has not addressed the overcrowding in classrooms, but has plans to build additional accommodation. Regular professional development meetings enable leaders to share good practice. Assessment procedures are starting to identify strategies to provide suitable challenges for the most able and specific support for the least able. These are not yet consistently applied throughout the school. The school has clearly demonstrated good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Further improve leadership and management by:
 - i. ensuring more consistency in the monitoring of classroom practices by focusing on students' learning
 - ii. monitoring the impact of teaching strategies to develop students' higher level thinking skills
 - iii. establishing regular data checks to analyse outcomes at school, year group, and individual student level in order to inform lesson planning.
2. Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning by:
 - i. enhancing the provision and support for students with identified special educational needs and barriers to their learning, both in and outside the classroom
 - ii. improving the quality of learning in Arabic, Islamic Studies and UAE social studies to ensure students' attainment and progress match that in other subjects.

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								