



مجلس أبوظبي للتعليم
Abu Dhabi Education Council
التعليم أولاً Education First



Private School Inspection Report

The Cambridge High School

Academic Year 2015 – 2016

The Cambridge High School

Inspection Date	9 – 12 November 2015		
Date of previous inspection	10 – 13 November 2013		
General Information		Students	
School ID	045	Total number of students	1811
Opening year of school	1988	Number of children in KG	200
Principal	Jason Jonathan King	Number of students in other phases	Primary: 785 Middle and High: 826
School telephone	+971 (0)2 552 1621	Age range	4 to 18 years
School Address	ME 9, Musaffah, PO Box 27602, Abu Dhabi	Grades or Year Groups	Kindergarten to Year 13
Official email (ADEC)	cambridgehigh.pvt@adec.ae	Gender	Mixed
School Website	www.gemscis-abudhabi.com	% of Emirati Students	11.5%
Fee ranges (per annum)	AED 13,438 to AED 28,380	Largest nationality groups (%)	1. Indian 31.5% 2. Pakistani 15.7%
Licensed Curriculum		Staff	
Main Curriculum	English National Curriculum (modified)	Number of teachers	106
Other Curriculum	-----	Number of teaching assistants (TAs)	29
External Exams/ Standardised tests	IGCSE; AS levels; Advanced Levels (A levels)	Teacher-student ratio	1:18 KG 1:16 KS1 1:17 KS2 1:14 KS3 1:12 KS4 1:12 KS5 Overall ratio 1:17
Accreditation	Cambridge Exams Board	Teacher turnover	6%



Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	5
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	106
Number of joint lesson observations	29
Number of parents' questionnaires	212 (return rate: 12.6%)
Details of other inspection activities	The inspection team held meetings with the principal, senior staff, board of trustees, heads of faculty (HoFs), teachers, students and parents. Inspectors observed assemblies and lessons and analysed school documents, performance data, records and students' work.

School	
School Aims	The school has four key aims and values: 1) To develop global citizenship 2) To grow through learning 3) To pursue excellence 4) To lead through innovation
School vision and mission	'To provide an appropriate British style model of education at affordable costs for students living in the UAE.'
Admission Policy	The school prides itself on being an inclusive setting. Its admission policy sets out clear guidance and procedures for students to be accepted in to the school. Students do not have to sit an entrance examination in order to enrol at the school.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	Principal, vice principal, kindergarten leader, head of lower primary, head of upper primary, head of secondary school (girls), head of secondary school (boys), head of sixth form, senior examinations officer, facilities manager, accountant, and HR manager.

SEN Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

SEN Category	Number of students identified through external assessments	Number of other students identified by the school
Intellectual disability	0	0
Specific Learning Disability	4	0
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	7	0
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	4	0
Speech and Language Disorders	4	0
Physical and health related disabilities	0	0
Visually impaired	0	0
Hearing impaired	1	0
Multiple disabilities	1	0

G&T Details (Refer to ADEC SEN Policy and Procedures)

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	24
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	4
Social maturity and leadership	0
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	0
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	5
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	1



The overall performance of the school

Inspectors considered the school in relation to 3 performance categories

Band A	High performing (Outstanding, Very Good or Good)
Band B	Satisfactory (Acceptable)
Band C	In need of significant improvement (Weak or Very Weak)

School was judged to be:	BAND (A)	Good
--------------------------	-----------------	-------------

	Band A High Performing			Band B Satisfactory	Band C In need of significant improvement	
Performance Standards	Outstanding	Very Good	Good	Acceptable	Weak	Very Weak
Performance Standard 1: Students' achievement						
Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills						
Performance Standard 3: Teaching and assessment						
Performance Standard 4: Curriculum						
Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students						
Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management						

Summary Evaluation: The school's overall performance						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

The Performance of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall performance

This is a good school. Senior leaders, trustees and staff have maintained a high quality of education across all performance standards since the last inspection. This is due to the vision and direction of the recently established leadership team. Senior leaders know the strengths of the school and what needs to be done in order to improve.

Students make good academic progress. This is largely because students demonstrate positive attitudes and work hard in lessons. Although teaching is good, some inconsistencies remain particularly in the primary phase. Work is not always challenging for the more able students and few opportunities are provided for students to collaborate and develop independent, research and critical-thinking skills.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

School leaders have maintained a high quality of provision since the last inspection. All recommendations from the previous inspection report have been addressed. Since the appointment of the principal in September 2014 and vice principal in September 2015, leaders are now more thorough in monitoring classroom practice. Teachers are beginning to use school data to improve the quality of their teaching and the school now has a special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). Teaching in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies has also improved since the last inspection. Some inconsistencies remain in the teaching of Arabic.

The school demonstrates good capacity to improve. The senior leadership team, along with the board of trustees, share the same vision. Together, they have a clear strategic direction to improve the school. The impact of this is beginning to show.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school prides itself on developing students' innovation and critical-thinking skills. Senior leaders have appointed a director to lead in this area. The school organises a variety of annual events and activities to promote innovation. Students take part in competitions and benefit from the school's fostered links with local organisations and schools. The school operates several clubs to develop students' innovation including a Model United Nations (MUN) and Science Teaching Engineering and Mathematics club (STEM). These are highly effective at increasing students' understanding of the world in which they live. They are thought provoking and challenge students' critical-thinking skills.



Students learn to develop their innovation skills through the curriculum. Themed days develop their appreciation of the world around them. Students learn about UAE culture and world issues. For example, they learn about the environment and how to care for our planet. In lessons, opportunities to develop students' research, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are not well developed. Few opportunities are provided for students to collaborate.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- strategic direction of the principal, vice principal and board of trustees
- students' outcomes at IGCSE, AS and A levels
- students' learning skills and positive attitudes
- relationships between staff and students
- parent partnership and involvement
- extra-curricular provision.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- the quality of teaching so that it meets the needs of all learners, particularly higher-attaining students
- the impact of middle leaders to further raise standards and improve teaching and learning.



Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
	Progress	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable	Good
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Good	Good	Acceptable	Acceptable
Social Studies	Attainment	N/A	Good	Good	N/A
	Progress	N/A	Good	Good	N/A
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Good	Good	Very Good
	Progress	Acceptable	Good	Good	Very Good
Mathematics	Attainment	Good	Good	Acceptable	Very Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Acceptable	Very Good
Science	Attainment	Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good
Language of instruction (if other than English and Arabic as First Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other subjects (Art, Music, PE)	Attainment	Good	Good	Good	Good
	Progress	Good	Good	Good	Good
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Good	Good	Good	Good



Attainment and progress are good overall. Children start the kindergarten with skills broadly acceptable for their age. By the time students leave the school, in Years 11 and 13, the majority attain skills that are above age related curriculum expectations in most subjects.

In kindergarten, children's attainment in Islamic education and Arabic is good. Children have a secure understanding of Islamic values and how these relate to their everyday life. For example, children were seen greeting, in Arabic, the adults who came into their room. Almost all children who start the kindergarten are not able to speak English. Through lessons and the learning environment, students make steady gains in their ability to read, write and speak in this subject. Children's progress is slower in English than in other areas of learning. Attainment and progress in mathematics, science and non-core subjects are good. The majority of students attain above curriculum expectations in these subjects. Children demonstrate positive attitudes in lessons and learn effectively through practical and engaging activities.

In the primary phase, students make good progress in most areas of learning. The majority of students attain above age-related curriculum expectations in Islamic education, social studies, English, mathematics, science and non-core subjects. Students who learn Arabic as a second language attain above curriculum expectations and make good progress in lessons. For example, the majority of these students can read sentences accurately. They know the appropriate vocabulary for the days of the week, colours and numbers to represent their age. This is as a result of good teaching. Students learning Arabic as a first language make acceptable progress. Lessons are often not challenging enough for most students and only acceptable gains are made in students' reading and writing skills. Achievement is stronger in Arabic in Years 1 and 2. Boys and girls attain in line with one another in English and mathematics. By the time students leave the primary phase, the large majority of students attain levels that are above those expected for their age in these subjects. Opportunities for students to develop their research, critical-thinking and problem-solving skills are acceptable in the primary phase. Few opportunities are provided for students to work collaboratively.

In the middle phase, students make good progress and attain above curriculum expectations in Islamic education, social studies, English and non-core subjects. Learning seen in lessons and in books, over time, shows that lessons are typically challenging. As a result, students make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Attainment and progress in Arabic and mathematics is acceptable. Work is not always challenging in these subjects, particularly for the higher-attaining students. As a result, students make only steady gains in their understanding. The school is aware of this through the data it collects. Attainment and progress in science



is very good. Students are taught well in these subjects and are asked questions that challenge them. Learning activities are practical and engaging. This enables the large majority of students to attain levels that are above curriculum expectations.

Students in the high school make good progress in Islamic education, Arabic (as a first language) and in non-core subjects. Students are well taught in these subjects. Lessons are often challenging for most students and are engaging. For example, some higher-attaining students were seen reciting the Holy Qur'an. Students memorised age appropriate verses and could read these with accuracy and understanding. This challenged the higher-attaining students well. For students learning Arabic as a second language, attainment and progress are acceptable. The large majority of students' speaking skills are broadly in line with curriculum standards. Attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science are very good. Students attain above curriculum expectations in these subjects at IGCSE, AS levels and A levels. This is as a result of good teaching in these year groups. Work is often challenging and most students are supported through teaching that engages and challenges them. Over time, attainment and progress continue to remain above age-related curriculum expectations in this phase. Students leave the school with skills that prepare them well for the next stage in their learning.

Students with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress. This is as a result of specialist teaching, intervention strategies and support from adults. Work is often well matched to the students' interests and needs.

Performance Standard 2: Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills

Students' personal and social development, and their innovation skills Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Personal development	Good	Good	Good	Very Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Very Good	Very Good

Overall, students' personal and social development are very good. Students, across all key stages, demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They work hard in lessons and respond well to feedback in order to improve their learning. This is a particularly strong feature in the high school where students are often challenged through the work set as well as through questions asked.

Students are responsible and considerate individuals. They care for one another and are polite and well mannered. This is a result of the school's positive climate for learning and the relationships fostered between staff and students. Behaviour is good. Students say that they feel safe at school and enjoy learning. There are no recorded incidents of bullying. Students and parents say this does not exist.

Students demonstrate positive attitudes towards healthy eating and maintaining active lifestyles. Students were seen participating in a range of sporting events across the school and eating foods that promote healthy living. They understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. For example, in a Year 7 class, students were talking about the effects on the body if too much sugar, carbohydrates and fats are consumed. They discussed the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and ways to achieve this.

Students' attendance rate of 96% is very good. The school actively promotes the importance of attending regularly and has clear procedures in place when students are absent. This includes contacting the parents promptly to find out why the students are not at school. Few students arrive late. Punctuality to lessons is variable. Lessons often finish when the bell rings for the next lesson. This impacts on the start of the following lesson where the students do not always arrive on time. In the majority of lessons seen, a few students arrived late.

Students' understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures is very good. They are educated about different cultures and celebrate festivals, such as 'Diwali' and international day. In an assembly, students were seen wearing their national dress. They explained why this was important to them and their society.

Students are actively involved in the life of the school. The school has an active school council and older students act as prefects, modelling positive attitudes and behaviour to other students. Students learn about different organisations in the local community and have established links with a hospital and local businesses. As a result, students support local and national causes including raising money for Breast Cancer awareness. Students have established an Eco Club to promote the school's involvement in protecting the environment. This group is particularly active. With the support of parents, students have held a recycling day and have helped to clean and tidy a local beach. Older students have a positive work ethic and successfully initiate and manage projects that have an impact on the life of the school and society. The school prides itself on developing students' innovation and critical-thinking skills. Senior leaders have appointed a director to lead in this area. The school organises a variety of annual events and activities to promote innovation.

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

Teaching and Assessment Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Teaching for effective learning	Good	Good	Good	Good
Assessment	Good	Good	Good	Good

In almost all subjects, teaching across the school is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge and convey this well to students. The majority of teachers use assessment data to help plan lessons. This is a new approach recently introduced by the leadership team. Lesson plans are consistently embedded and used across the school. Teachers now think more carefully about the different components of each lesson, particularly how to support lower attaining students and those with special educational needs (SEN). Most teachers use assessment opportunities to establish how well students are learning. For example, in a Year 2 Islamic education lesson, students assessed their own progress. With help, students identified what they understood and where there were gaps in their understanding. This information was used by the teacher to plan future lessons. In another example, a PE teacher reshaped



the direction of learning in a lesson because he recognised that students found dribbling a ball difficult. As a result, more time was spent effectively learning how to control a ball by developing this skill.

Lessons are usually well matched to most students' level of understanding. Greater challenge is needed for the more able students, particularly in the primary phase. In most subjects, this group of students are set work that is not challenging enough. They often have to spend time answering questions that are too easy before accessing more challenging work. This is less evident in the high school.

Teachers model learning well. The large majority ask some effective questions to challenge students. Support in class is often provided for less able students. Teaching assistants help students with SEN effectively. This group of students make good progress.

Teaching in Arabic is inconsistent and does not always result in good outcomes for students. In the majority of lessons, particularly in the primary and middle phases, lessons are often directed too much by adults and do not challenge students to think for themselves. As a result, there are insufficient opportunities for students to develop independent, collaboration, research and critical-thinking skills. Lessons provide few opportunities for students to collaborate and develop speaking and writing skills. This is also true of Arabic as a second language in the middle phase and high school. Where teaching is less effective, teachers direct the learning and activities are textbook or worksheet based. In these lessons, particularly in English, resources to support learning are limited and do not always accelerate students' progress. In art, music, information and communication technology (ICT) and science, lessons are often practical. This helps to engage students and secure a good level of understanding.

Marking to provide constructive feedback is an area for development across the school. Students' work, particularly in mathematics, is regularly marked with a tick. Marking does not let students know their next steps in learning or what they need to do to improve.

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

Curriculum Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
Curriculum design and implementation	Good	Good	Good	Good
Curriculum adaptation	Good	Good	Good	Good

The school's curriculum implementation and adaptation is good. It is broad and balanced. By the time students leave the school, they demonstrate a good level of knowledge, skill and understanding in almost all subjects. Students are offered a wide choice of curriculum subject options in the middle phase and high school. For example, students can choose from humanities, business studies, travel and tourism. The curriculum offers provision that meets the needs and interests for most students so that they are well equipped for their next stage of learning.

The school enriches its curriculum through highly effective extra-curricular provision. For example, the school participates in various sporting events, has an active school council, a MUN committee and a STEM club. These are well attended by students and develop sport and leadership skills in range of curriculum areas. Few cross-curricular links are planned in the curriculum. This results in students not always transferring skills between subjects. In the minority of lessons observed, students were taught how learning was meaningful to real life.

The school places a strong emphasis on developing students' learning about Emirati culture and society. Programmes develop students' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the heritage of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). For example, in Year 4, students are taught about the importance of different places in the UAE and in Year 9 students learn about the social challenges that occurred in the UAE after oil was discovered.

In the majority of lessons, the curriculum does not meet the needs of the more able students. This is because curriculum plans do not currently provide enough detail about how skills are developed from one year to the next. Through the school's review of its curriculum, senior leaders have highlighted this as an area for development. The senior leadership team is working to develop plans so that the curriculum better meets the needs of all learners.

Performance Standard 5: The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students Indicators	KG	Primary	Middle	High
---	----	---------	--------	------

Health and safety, including arrangements for child protection/ safeguarding	Good	Good	Good	Good
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good

The protection, care, guidance and support of students are good. The school ensures that all staff are appropriately vetted prior to starting their appointment. All members of staff are aware of the child protection policy and procedures. As a result, students enjoy attending school and feel safe.

The school's building is well maintained and safe. Security officers monitor access to the building and closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras are in place. The school has detailed risk assessments outlining fire, lock down and evacuation procedures. These are understood by all adults. A qualified nurse operates the school's clinic. Medication is appropriately stored and records of incidents logged. Procedures for students going home are also well considered. Adults monitor students leaving the premises. They ensure this is safe at all times. They allow younger students to board buses first. Adults supervise buses in transit.

The school building has three levels. The learning environment on the ground floor is accessible for students with mobility difficulties. Most specialist learning facilities are located on the ground floor, including the recreation grounds and swimming pool. Food served in the canteen promotes healthy eating. This is further reinforced through the school's curriculum. Classrooms vary in size. The minority of rooms are too small for large classes to work in, which sometimes impacts on students' concentration and learning.

Students behave well. Adults use a range of age-appropriate strategies to manage behaviour and reward achievements. Behaviour was less effective during primary break time. Adults supervising break do not remind students not to run in the corridors during this time. Parents are discouraged from taking students on holiday



during term time. Such requests are not authorised by the school. This promotes good attendance.

Most students who have SEN have been identified by the school. Few students, (details included on the register in the report) have been externally assessed. These students receive specialist provision both in class and through intervention programmes held in the 'achievement centre'. Detailed records track SEN students' attainment. These students make good progress. The SENCO has fostered positive links with parents. Student targets are shared with parents as well as ideas about how they can support learning at home. The school identifies gifted and talented students. Although this group of students is not always fully challenged in lessons, extra-curricular provision is very good.

The school provides good support for high school students. They receive career guidance and are well informed about university courses to further develop their learning. For students who do not attain the grades needed in their exams, the school provides opportunities for students to retake tests in order to secure employment or a place at their chosen university.

Performance Standard 6: Leadership and management

Leadership and management Indicators	
The effectiveness of leadership	Good
Self-evaluation and improvement planning	Good
Partnerships with parents and the community	Very Good
Governance	Very Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Good
The leadership and management of the school are good. Along with the heads of faculty (HoFs), senior leaders have a clear vision: To become outstanding. To do this, leaders are focusing on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that all students achieve their potential. All staff and trustees share this vision. The educational leadership of the school is good. Most leaders demonstrate a secure knowledge of the curriculum and best practices in teaching, learning and assessment.	



Senior leaders have put in place more rigorous forms of monitoring to raise the profile of teaching, although some inconsistencies remain. The school now uses data more effectively to track students' achievement. This is beginning to be used more effectively by teachers to plan lessons and is impacting positively on teaching and learning across the school.

Relationships and communication between staff are very good. Staff have clearly-defined roles and responsibilities and work together effectively. Performance management arrangements now hold teachers to account for the attainment and progress students make. Regular training is provided for teachers. This results in staff being kept informed of recent developments in education. The school's self-evaluation is good. The school has identified key areas for improvement. A well-considered school development plan (SDP) monitors the progress made towards these targets. Senior leaders regularly review this.

The HoFs know the main strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects. They monitor learning through observation, planning and students' work. They support teachers in order to improve the quality of provision. HoFs need to share good practice more in their subjects and across year groups to ensure teaching is consistently good or better in all phases. Senior leaders need to work together to develop curriculum plans so that they better meet the needs of all students.

Parent partnership is a strength of the school. Parents are actively involved in shaping the direction of the school. A committee of parents regularly meets with senior leaders to share views on how the school can improve further. Their ideas are included in the SDP. The school prides itself on its communication with parents. It keeps parents informed through regular newsletters, parents' evenings, written reports and through the school's website. Parents and teachers also communicate through an online portal where students' achievements and targets are shared.

Senior leaders receive very good support from the board of trustees. Trustees regularly review progress through visiting the school and they provide training to ensure student outcomes remain high. Together with the school, trustees have recognised inconsistencies in teaching, particularly in Arabic. As a result, they have appointed a new Arabic HoF and a subject adviser who will provide support, guidance and professional development for teachers. The school and board of trustees rigorously monitor school complaints. In the last year, only two complaints were made. Both concerned issues to do with admission. Neither was upheld.

The day-to-day management of the school is very good. Clear routines and procedures are in place to ensure the school runs smoothly. Resources do not always promote



good learning. For example, ICT resources are not always reliable and are sometimes slow to work.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve teaching by:
 - i. delivering lessons that cater for the needs of all students, particularly those who are more able
 - ii. providing greater opportunities for collaboration so that students develop their critical-thinking, research and problem-solving skills
 - iii. providing more effective feedback to students through marking so that they know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
2. Strengthen the effectiveness of middle leadership by:
 - i. modelling good practice across the school in teaching, learning and use of assessment
 - ii. reviewing curriculum plans so that they promote greater opportunities for independent learning, research and critical thinking.