



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



Inspection Report

Canadian International School

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Canadian International School

Inspection Date	27 – 30 April 2014
School ID#	102
Licensed Curriculum	Canadian (Alberta)
Number of Students	663
Age Range	3 years 8 months to 18 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Larry Thaxter
School Address	Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 556 4206
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 256 4207
Official Email (ADEC)	canadianint.pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.cisabudhabi.com
Date of last inspection	5 – 8 November 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:

- very good English speaking and listening skills for nearly all students throughout the school
- students' behaviour inside and outside the classroom and their positive attitudes to learning
- very good classroom relationships with a climate of mutual respect
- the participation of students in a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities
- very good buildings and sports facilities
- very good relationships with parents.

The main areas for improvement are:

- standards achieved by students in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies taught in Arabic
 - academic standards achieved by more able students
 - planning to meet the needs of students of all abilities within classes.
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 4 inspectors who observed 69 lessons. They talked to the owners' representative, the school's leaders, subject coordinators and other staff, parents and groups of students. They analysed data provided by the school and a range of documents about policies and procedures. They scrutinized students' work and the broader work of the school including extra-curricular activities. The principal and leadership team were involved throughout the inspection process and 1 joint observation of a lesson was completed.

Description of the School

The school opened in 2007 in purpose built premises located in Khalifa City A. Since that time additions have been made to provide further facilities and classrooms. The school's aim is that students 'embrace challenge, respect diversity and achieve personal and academic excellence'. The principal has been in post for the duration of this academic year and there have been other changes to the senior leadership team since the last inspection. The school offers a Canadian curriculum following the Alberta standards. At grade 12 students take the Alberta Diploma examination alongside teacher-designed assessments. The current grade 12 cohort is only the third to have progressed through the school.

With 663 students, the school has grown by 74 students since the last inspection and is now at full capacity. There are slightly more boys than girls and slightly more non-Muslim than Muslim students. Students come from 70 different countries with 23% from Canada, 12% from the UAE and 11 % from the USA. There are further small proportions from the UK, Lebanon, Egypt as well as a large number of European countries. 12% of students are identified as having special educational (SEN) needs, with a significant number of these with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The school is owned through a joint enterprise of three partners. It has an open admissions policy for all students. Fees are AED 33,000 for children in the KG rising to AED 45,000 for students in grade 12.

The Effectiveness of the School

Students' attainment & progress

The assessment of student learning measured against the Alberta Curriculum standards demonstrates that the school attains results close to those achieved by students resident in Canada. Considering students' starting points and that a significant number speak English as an additional language this represents good progress. Standards remain at a consistent level as students move from grade to grade. Fewer students at Grade 12 reach the higher standards achieved by their peers resident in Canada. In many lessons, teachers have high expectations and a substantial percentage of students are demonstrating attainment levels above international standards. Students achieve high standards in art and music, and these are particular strengths of the school.

Attainment and progress are particularly good in English and students throughout the school are confident speakers with the skills to adapt for audience and purpose. This is also true of students for whom English is an additional language. Standards in mathematics and science are good in all sections of the school where students develop good problem solving skills. In many lessons, information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed through the use of digital technologies in learning activities. Attainment and progress are satisfactory in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies.

The development of speaking, listening, reading, writing, thinking and ICT skills are good. Reading, speaking and listening skills are above age expectations in KG and Grade 1. Students make good or better progress in their English speaking skills as they move through the early grades. SEN students and students with identified language needs make good progress due to the efficiently directed support provided by dedicated support staff. Students who learn more quickly than their peers make satisfactory progress in nearly all lessons. In the older grades learning activities often provide students with insufficient challenge.

Assessment strategies are satisfactory. Teachers use a range of informal assessments during lessons. In English lessons students become familiar with directing their own learning and this affords teachers time to undertake informal assessments with individual students. The school designs tests linked to the Alberta standards that are rigorous and accurately monitor students' progress.

Students' personal development

Students in all grades make very good progress in acquiring the personal and social skills that are at least appropriate for their age. The school encourages students to take increasing levels of responsibility for their learning as they

progress through the school. Students move around the school in a purposeful manner without close supervision exercising good self-control and they enjoy their day. They see the school as belonging to them and where their own learning agenda is important. This supports their growth in self-confidence and encourages their natural curiosity. They rejoice in the achievements of others and show empathy to those who may be experiencing difficulties.

Students come from many different cultural backgrounds across North America, the Middle East and Europe; students are committed to the school's aim of tolerance in diversity. Students recognize and subscribe to the UAE's values and principles echoing in their own behavior the country's generosity of spirit. Consequently, there is little or no ill feeling between students of different traditions and a sense of community prevails. Students' understanding of community is enhanced by the opportunities provided in the curriculum to undertake a mentoring role with younger children by being a 'reading buddy'.

Students are making good progress acquiring the skills that will properly prepare them for the next stage in life. They acquire a questioning spirit and an assertiveness that will give them confidence as they make choices about their future. Students take part in swimming, softball, basketball and soccer activities at school as well as in external competitions. Students also appreciate the range of artistic, dance, drama and musical activities that are available. Attendance is above average consistently around 95%. Few students are late for school with only a handful arriving after the singing of the national anthem.

The quality of teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the younger grades teachers know their children very well. They are able to relate childrens' learning needs to the provision they make in the classroom so that most are engaged on appropriately challenging tasks. From the moment they start in school children are learning to make good choices about the tasks they could undertake, the order in which they do them and even the location that best suits their chosen activity. As they move through the school, teachers continue to nurture this element of choice. This is a significant strength of the school. In a film elective class for older students, the whole school became a classroom that students were able to occupy in order to progress their chosen project.

Very good teaching practice takes place in all areas of the school. In one very good science class students were encouraged to think out loud in order to refine and extend their understanding of Newton's work on gravity. In a few classes, teachers spend too long introducing planned activities thus reducing the time when students are actively engaged. In Arabic, Islamic education or social studies

students have limited opportunities to work either as independently or collaboratively as they do in other classes.

Teachers develop very good relationships with students. They show an interest in their students' lives and often use students' ideas and concerns as a starting point for classroom activities. Class sizes are never large and are often small in the older grades. This provides students with a high level of support from academic staff. Teachers and students use the available classroom technologies with confidence to advance their learning. Students often responsibly use their own devices as a natural addition to the various tasks they complete.

The quality of planning for learning is variable and lacks consistency. Students are not always clear about the learning objectives at the start of a lesson. Teachers employ a good range of question and answer strategies that provide effective checks on learning and students are regularly asked to reflect on what they have learnt. This is not often extended into how students know what they have learnt. Peer assessment is regularly used to good effect in older classes. In one music class students were asked to examine their own playing as a band in order to reflect on where improvements could be made in technique.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is good. The school follows an Alberta based curriculum supplemented with adaptations that enable most ADEC requirements to be met for the teaching of Arabic, Islamic education and social studies. The school is rigorous in its use of the Alberta Standards so that they provide a satisfactory basis for measuring student outcomes. The school curriculum presents nearly all students with relevant and interesting programmes of study. In most subjects teachers relate student learning to the world in which they live, this is less apparent in Arabic classes. The school does not currently provide sufficient time in the week for subjects taught in Arabic.

The curriculum in KG is balanced, offering children a broad range of academic, sensory, physical and social activities. Classrooms in KG reflect the interactive nature of the curriculum. These young children are well supported by teachers and assistants as they investigate, imagine and immerse themselves in their learning environment. Older students are able to choose between a reasonable number of electives given the relatively small size of the high school section. The art, music and sporting curriculums are a strength of the school. The school has several music bands for students in different grades. These perform to a very high standard. Large numbers of students participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities; the school is often as busy after school as it is during the day. The formal curriculum is enhanced by well chosen enrichment activities. The

science fair allowed students to develop their own scientific investigations, much of which were undertaken at home, and present these to their fellow students and parents.

The needs of students with SEN are well met. Appropriate ‘small steps’ curriculum programmes, provide opportunities for students to make similar progress to their peers. The school does not sufficiently plan to identify and meet the needs of the more able students.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The school makes good provision for the care, guidance and support of its students. The school’s very positive ethos is clearly evident from the calm, ordered and friendly behaviour of the students. This is successfully encouraged by the relaxed, caring nature of the relationships staff create with each other and their students. The school has effective policies and processes for ensuring the care and protection of its students. The many parents spoken to during the inspection were clear that any hint of bullying and harassment were absent from the school. The principal and senior staff lead by example in ensuring that staff always deal courteously with students. There are good facilities to provide for the religious, physical and emotional needs of the students. The guidance provided to students in the senior section regarding their career choices is satisfactory.

The quality of the school’s buildings and premises

The school buildings provide a very good physical environment for the number of students enrolled. The buildings are bright, clean and hygienic and kept in a very good state of repair. A separate building houses a swimming pool and a large gymnasium. Outside there are several small, grassed areas for sports and general play. Playgrounds areas are of good size, but offer insufficient shaded areas.

Procedures for ensuring the safety and security of the students are good and any causes for concern are dealt with speedily. All visitors to the school are required to sign in and are given a visitor’s badge. Students in grades 4 and above make very good use of the school accommodation to find places in which they can undertake their studies in small groups or alone; corridors, the library, computer suite, outside spaces or vacant rooms become productive learning environments. Access to upper floors is difficult for those with mobility problems.

The school’s resources to support its aims

The level of resourcing in the school is good. The availability and use of classroom technologies is good. Teachers make very effective use of interactive electronic whiteboards to engage learners and ensure that lessons proceed at a smart pace. Practical resources to support literacy in both Arabic and English are

plentiful as are resources to support numeracy. Classroom resources for science are not always readily available which restricts some investigative work in the younger grades. The ICT suite is used well to provide a resource centre for all subjects. The school has a bank of laptops that can also be accessed by teachers as the need arises. There are two libraries with a plentiful supply of books in English; both lack a sufficient supply of books in Arabic.

The outside facilities for sport are satisfactory. A small, grassed area provides space for softball and the facilities for basketball are strong. There is a good size, indoor swimming pool that is well used throughout the year. Canteen facilities are hygienic but small; this is an area both the parents and the school would like to improve.

The school is developing a strong knowledge base for meeting the needs of its students with SEN. A local specialist centre for children on the autistic spectrum provides very good advice and individual support that is paid for by parents. Individual Instructional Plans (IIPs) are well constructed and provide classroom teachers and support staff with clear and helpful guidance.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership and management of the school is good. Senior leaders understand the processes that need to be in place to ensure the school continues to improve. Completing the Self evaluation form (SEF) was a relatively new process for the current leadership team and was not sufficiently self-critical. As a result some of the judgments were like aspirations rather than an accurate reflection of how the school is performing. School development planning is well linked to developing the skills of the teaching and support staff. The owners' management team understands the needs of the school and are interested and supportive. The principal does not have a delegated budget. The owners' management team are working with the school to trial budget allocations to subject leaders.

Processes for the observation of teaching and learning are emerging. Senior staff are clear about how to promote good practice in teaching and learning. Lessons are observed and the judgments made are accurate. Areas identified for improvements in teaching skills are followed up with support and training; this approach has produced some positive results in the teaching of Arabic.

The school maintains very good communication with parents. It takes note of their views and meets their requests when appropriate. It has effective strategies for helping parents understand the work their children are doing and the progress they make in their studies. Parents take an active interest in school activities, providing much of the inspiration for National day and other celebrations. The

school deals with the very few parental complaints speedily. It needs to provide a more complete log of actions taken and outcomes.

Progress since the last inspection

The school has maintained the good quality of its work since the last inspection. It has made some progress in addressing the recommendations made by that inspection report. Further and speedier progress has been inhibited by frequent changes in the senior leadership. If the school retains senior staff with experience and outstanding management and leadership skills it will be well placed to move towards being a very good or outstanding school.

Teachers of Arabic now use a broader range of active learning strategies that are more successful in engaging the interest of learners. UAE social studies now has a programme of study that is relevant to the geography and culture of the country. The position of curriculum coordinators has been strengthened. They have some responsibilities relating to the performance management of teachers in their subject and have more input into medium-term curriculum planning. The available resources for ICT are now well used by teachers and students. Library resources for Arabic remain at a low level. As a result of changes to the canteen facilities and promotion by staff, students eat healthy snacks and have easy access to water throughout the day.

The school has demonstrated good capacity to make further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the standards achieved by students in Arabic, Islamic education and social studies by:
 - i. ensuring that sufficient time is given on the timetable to the teaching of subjects taught in Arabic
 - ii. providing an even wider range of active learning strategies so that students are more engaged with their studies
 - iii. providing opportunities for peer observation so that teachers can see good practice modelled.
2. Ensure the needs of students of all abilities are met more effectively by:
 - i. taking greater account of students starting points from the results of prior assessments
 - ii. identifying learning outcomes achievable by all students, whatever their ability
 - iii. providing learning activities that provide those who learn more slowly with activities that will enable them to be successful
 - iv. early and more reliable identification of students who are gifted in their academic studies and providing activities that challenge and extend their learning.
3. Endeavour to ensure greater continuity in the senior leadership so that development plans can be more securely established and improvement proceeds at a quicker pace.

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								