



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



# New School Inspection Report

Creative British School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

iqraa

Creative British School

|                              |                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inspection Date</b>       | 27 – 30 April 2015                                                                 |
| <b>School ID#</b>            | 253                                                                                |
| <b>Licensed Curriculum</b>   | English National Curriculum                                                        |
| <b>Number of Students</b>    | 658                                                                                |
| <b>Age Range</b>             | 3 years 8 months to 16 years                                                       |
| <b>Gender</b>                | Mixed                                                                              |
| <b>Principal</b>             | Tony McSheffrey (acting)                                                           |
| <b>School Address</b>        | 33 <sup>rd</sup> Street, Musaffah, Abu Dhabi                                       |
| <b>Telephone Number</b>      | +971 (0)2 552 3700                                                                 |
| <b>Fax Number</b>            | +971 (0)2 552 8200                                                                 |
| <b>Official Email (ADEC)</b> | <a href="mailto:Creativebritish.pvt@adec.ac.ae">Creativebritish.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a> |
| <b>School Website</b>        | <a href="http://www.cbsabudhabi.com">www.cbsabudhabi.com</a>                       |
| <b>Date of opening</b>       | September 2015                                                                     |

## 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)

|                                     |                |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>The School was judged to be:</b> | <b>BAND C;</b> | <b>GRADE 7</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|

---

### The main strengths of the school are:

- school leaders' vision for school improvement; their expertise, energy and commitment
- the school's positive ethos towards the care of its students.

### The main areas for improvement are:

- strengthening the school leadership and ensuring autonomy for senior leaders, particularly with issues related to staffing and a devolved budget
  - the quality of governance
  - the quality of teaching and learning so that students make more rapid academic progress in all subjects
  - the quality of provision in the Kindergarten so it is well matched to the needs of young children
  - the relevance and range of experiences offered by the curriculum so that students develop a broader range of academic and personal skills
  - the range and quality of resources; particularly staff shortages, KG and classroom resources, computer infrastructure and software.
-

## Introduction

---

The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors. They observed 64 lessons, conducted several meetings with senior staff, subject coordinators, teachers, students, parents and the proprietor. They analysed available assessment results, scrutinized students' work across the school, the 107 responses to the parents' questionnaire and considered many of the schools policies and other documents. The principal and senior leaders were involved throughout the inspection process.

## Description of the School

---

The Creative British School is located in the Musaffah area of Abu Dhabi. It opened as a new school in September 2014, catering for students from Kindergarten (KG) to Grade 10. Most students previously attended villa schools. The school building, historically a government Cycle 2 girls' school, has been partially modified to more closely meet the school's current needs. There have been changes in leadership since the opening of the school. The founding principal left and the former vice-principal became acting principal at the beginning of April 2015. There is a high turnover of staff. The owner, who is also the chairman of the board of governors, visits the school occasionally.

The school follows the English National Curriculum (ENC), culminating in Cambridge IGCSE examinations; Arabic, Islamic and social studies follow the MoE curriculum. There are 658 students, 55% are boys, almost all are Muslim, 79% are of Arabic heritage and 1% are Emirati. Of the 27 different nationalities represented in the school population, Egyptians 22%, Syrian 13%, Sudanese 12%, Jordanian 11% and Pakistani 10%, are the largest groups. There are 93 children in KG, 365 in primary (grades 1 – 6) and 200 in secondary (grades 7 – 10). Students from KG – Grade 4 are taught in mixed classes and from Grade 5 upwards they are taught in separate classes for boys and girls. There are 156 students identified with special educational needs (SEN): including behaviour, specific and moderate learning difficulties, severe learning needs, speech and language needs, hearing and autism. Almost all students speak English as an additional language (EAL) and approximately 350 students have some difficulties with learning in English, which is the main language of instruction. The admissions policy is inclusive, in line with ADEC guidelines. No external tests have yet been taken.

Fees range from AED 5,000 to AED 18,000 per year, excluding uniform and transport. These are in the affordable to medium category.

## The Effectiveness of the School

---

Creative British school is in need of significant improvement as it provides a very unsatisfactory standard of education. All aspects of the school are very unsatisfactory with the exception of the premises, which are satisfactory, and students' care, protection and guidance, which is unsatisfactory. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the areas for improvement. The owner is overly involved in the operation of the school and the recently constituted board of governors is highly ineffective. Rates of absenteeism amongst teachers are high, morale is low and the turnover of teachers since September 2014 exceeds 50%.

Students' behaviour is improving but remains unsatisfactory. Attitudes to learning are developing, and for girls are satisfactory. Too much teaching fails to engage and motivate students and attainment is below international standards in all subjects.

The values, culture and heritage of the UAE are not well integrated across the curriculum. There are too few extracurricular activities available to enrich learning experiences for students. The range and quality of resources are inadequate and do not sufficiently support the delivery of the curriculum.

### Students' attainment & progress

Evidence from lesson observation and scrutiny of students' work indicates that attainment and progress in all grades are very unsatisfactory. Attainment is below age-related expectations. Standards in mathematics are unsatisfactory; in English, Arabic, Islamic education, social studies, science and information and communication technology (ICT) they are very unsatisfactory. The attainment of students in other curriculum areas, such as art, physical education (PE), history and geography is unsatisfactory and progress variable. Girls' academic and personal progress is satisfactory and is better than boys. The progress of students with SEN is poor and for the more able it is very unsatisfactory. Progress made by all students towards the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as independence and critical thinking, is very unsatisfactory.

Children who start school in KG rarely have any prior experience of English. They do not always speak standard Arabic and their speaking skills are generally below age-related expectations. They make slow progress in all areas of learning including communication and literacy skills, numeracy, creativity, physical and thinking skills. By the time they leave KG attainment is below age-related expectations and progress is unsatisfactory.

Few students have experience of using English outside school. For the majority standards are well below the expectations for students who speak EAL. Students' speaking skills, confidence when speaking and range of vocabulary are highly variable and reflect the range of students' prior learning experiences. The majority of students do not read with fluency and comprehension is limited. Inconsistency in the teaching of phonics and reading skills do not support rapid progress. Writing skills are particularly underdeveloped. By Grade 9, the majority of students' writing is mostly at basic sentence level; simple punctuation and spelling are not always accurate. Limited English skills have an impact on their access to all other areas of the curriculum taught in English.

In Arabic, students' have a reasonable knowledge of grammatical rules and use them accurately in spoken and written communication. Reading and writing skills remain below age-related expectations and students in older grades have too few opportunities to produce extended writing. There are limited opportunities for students to develop reading skills. In Islamic education, students' memorization of the Holy Qur'an is in line with age-related expectations. Most students have a basic understanding of the meaning of verses but the links between learning and their everyday lives is limited. Students' basic knowledge about early Muslims and the prophets is weak. By Grade 9, accurate recitation of the Holy Qur'an is unsatisfactory.

In mathematics, basic numeracy skills are developed reasonably well, especially in primary, and most students can use the 4 operations adequately. They have a satisfactory knowledge of multiplication facts. Their ability to investigate number and to apply their basic numeracy skills to solve multi-step problems and those related to the real world, is underdeveloped. In secondary, there are gaps in students' knowledge, skills and understanding.

In science, students are developing both knowledge and practical skills. Investigative skills are at an early stage of development. Primary students are able to understand what makes a fair test, for example, in measuring the time taken by different objects to slide down a slope. They are less confident in managing resources scientifically. They can record experiments in their own words but not in a logical format. In secondary, students can carry out simple practical experiments; they lack experience and ability in making predictions, hypothesizing and testing. Students demonstrate limited enquiry skills and scientific rigour.

Information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the school are at an early stage of development. In primary, students are becoming more familiar with basic keyboard skills. In secondary, students have many gaps in their ICT skills and their attainment is very unsatisfactory. Better teaching and a clearly defined

curriculum, is enabling secondary students to make rapid progress in ICT. For example, they are beginning to be able to create a webpage using lists, images, colour attributes, hyperlinks to text and email addresses.

### **Students' personal development**

Students' personal development is unsatisfactory. Senior leaders report that behaviour at the start of the school year was poor; it is improving, and is better for girls than boys. It remains unsatisfactory overall. Students report they increasingly trust teachers and there are growing levels of respect for them. Attendance at 93% is improving and above average. Punctuality remains an issue at the start of the day and for lessons.

The school fulfils its obligations by raising the UAE flag at assembly every morning and students listen to the national anthem. Students lead and contribute to assemblies. Prefects help monitor corridors and stairwells; there are few other opportunities to develop leadership skills or contribute to the school community. Students' knowledge and understanding of UAE values, culture and heritage is limited.

Football and art clubs take place at break times. There are few other opportunities for students to develop personal and social skills through participation in activities, competitions and sporting events. Their practical understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives is limited. The development of skills and the personal attributes students need for the world of work or further education is very unsatisfactory

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

Teaching and learning are very unsatisfactory. More than two thirds of lessons were judged to be very unsatisfactory or poor. About a third of teaching was deemed satisfactory or better. The most effective lessons were seen in mathematics and ICT, the least effective were mainly in the subjects taught in Arabic and English.

Teachers have a range of prior experience; few are familiar with the requirements and delivery of the ENC and teaching methods are limited. Not all have sufficiently well developed behaviour management skills. Resources to support teaching and learning are inadequate. Teachers in KG and the lower grades do not have sufficient understanding of how young children learn and so teaching strategies are inappropriate and ineffective. Classroom assistants in the KG are not used effectively to support learning.

Teachers' subject knowledge is mostly secure. There are exceptions to this. Not all English teachers are native speakers and some do not model English to a high

enough standard. There is little or no expertise in teaching students who speak EAL. Following professional development, learning objectives are now consistently shared with students at the start of lessons, most lessons are structured and reasonably planned and a balance between teaching input and student activity is achieved. Too often learning activities occupy students without promoting sufficient learning. The relevance of learning to students' daily lives is not clear enough, lessons do not motivate or engage sufficiently, teacher expectations are low and the pace of lessons is too slow. There are too few opportunities for students to develop thinking skills.

Assessment for learning is not widely understood and planning to meet the needs of individual students is at a very early stage of development. Marking of students' work is inconsistent and does not help students to improve. There are not enough teaching assistants to support students' needs.

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

Students' needs are not adequately met through the implementation of the curriculum, which is very unsatisfactory. Weaknesses in curriculum delivery are a key reason why many students' engagement, learning skills and personal development are unsatisfactory and the progress they make very unsatisfactory. The curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance.

The implementation of the KG curriculum is poor with few opportunities for child initiated learning and gross motor skill development. Curriculum delivery does not enable students to make adequate progress. The learning needs of young children are not well understood, there is insufficient activity based learning and too few opportunities for free-flow activities.

Across all phases, curriculum delivery does not sufficiently challenge or promote creativity, thinking or problem-solving. The curriculum has not been sufficiently adjusted to make it relevant to students' everyday lives and does not interest or motivate students sufficiently. There are too few opportunities within the curriculum to promote UAE values, culture and heritage.

There are not enough opportunities to develop independence, problem-solving skills, investigation, research, collaboration and personal qualities. There are insufficient extracurricular activities, sporting events, competitions and other enrichment activities. Students are not adequately prepared for their future lives.

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

The protection, care, guidance and support of students is unsatisfactory. Pastoral systems and support for students have been set up but are ineffective. Large numbers of students with specific needs require additional support; there are

insufficient staff to meet the demand. Additionally, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) has frequently been required to provide cover for absent teachers. As a result, many students do not receive the support they are entitled to. This directly and negatively impacts on the rates of academic progress made by students identified with SEN and the more able. There is inconsistency in behaviour management by teachers across all classes.

All matters related to students' health, safety and security are given a high priority and are satisfactory. The majority of students feel secure and well looked after. The school is vigilant in safeguarding student welfare. Any incidents of bullying or other forms of intimidation are handled effectively. The child protection policy and associated procedures are clearly understood by teachers and students; incidents have been handled appropriately. Senior leaders, teachers and staff have created an ethos of care for students. They recognize the importance of good attendance and punctuality and take some action to promote them. The rewards and consequences applied by the school are fair. The experienced SENCO has provided highly effective support to help modify some students' behaviour. Arrangements for first aid are satisfactory.

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

This school's buildings and premises are satisfactory. Most classrooms are of a good size, cool and light. The environment is clean, orderly and well maintained. Some basic displays in classrooms and shared areas of the school celebrate students' work and help make the school attractive. Adequate security measures are in place to prevent intruders gaining access.

Most specialist teaching areas are suitable for the delivery of the curriculum. The single science laboratory is small, restricting the movement of students. The library is not in operation due to a limited book stock and no librarian. The majority of PE lessons take place in the large air-conditioned gym. Timetabling demands on the space necessitates some PE lessons taking place outside which is not ideal during the hotter months. The temporary school building has not been adjusted to meet the needs of students with physical disabilities. KG children have no access to outdoor learning areas.

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

The provision of resources is very unsatisfactory in all grades. There are staff shortages including: a substantive principal, vice principal, middle leaders, a KG coordinator, librarian, and laboratory technician, classroom assistants in lower primary, SEN support staff and EAL expertise to meet the needs of all the students. There are not enough resources in the classroom to support the effective delivery of the curriculum. In KG classrooms, there are insufficient

resources to support free or structured play, investigation or reading. There are shortages in science resources and the library is not fully stocked with books or computers for students to carry out independent research.

Data projectors and smart boards have been installed in all classrooms. Teachers are allocated laptops and there are adequate numbers of computers for students to access during lessons. The computer infrastructure does not meet the needs of the school, the range of software packages is too limited and restricts the delivery of the curriculum, and there is no wireless internet access. The school has adequate procedures in place to ensure that transport is fit for purpose and safety requirements are met. The school site is fitted with CCTV cameras.

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

Leadership and management are very unsatisfactory. The owner is too involved in the day-to-day running of the school. This impacts negatively on the speed of school improvement. Decision making and a suitable budget have not been delegated to the school leadership. Onerous procurement procedures mean that resources are not secured rapidly enough. Communication between the owner and school leaders is not effective or frequent enough and prevents school leaders being able to plan appropriately for changes and school expansion. Despite well-considered school development plans, the senior leadership team are often required to be reactive to situations introduced by the owner rather than being appropriately strategic. Staff contracts are not always honoured, salaries not always paid in full and staff do not feel valued. This has a detrimental effect on the morale of staff and to all aspects of school improvement.

Self-evaluation is accurate, supported by evidence and used to identify key priorities for school improvement. Systems for assessment and tracking students' progress have been established, regular professional development is well targeted and its impact is monitored. Progress against school targets have been made, albeit more slowly than intended. This is partly due to the lack of a full complement of senior leadership staff, continual departure of teachers and constant need for senior leaders to provide cover for absent teachers. There are limited links between the school and outside organisations.

Parents are increasingly supportive, the majority who responded to the questionnaire are positive and pleased that their children attend the school. Parents are not currently involved in decision-making. There are appropriate procedures in place for dealing with their complaints.

## Capacity for further development

---

Senior leaders strive for continuous school improvement and have clearly demonstrated some professional expertise, commitment and resilience in challenging circumstances. A fragile ethos of care and a sense of community are emerging. Senior leaders have demonstrated some capacity to make improvement. They now require greater autonomy if they are to have sustained impact and make rapid improvement to teaching and academic achievement.

The board of governors does not undertake its responsibilities appropriately or effectively. Plans for rapid expansion puts the tenuous recent gains and any future improvement at risk. The over involvement of the proprietor undermines the senior leaders, is detrimental to staff morale and the recruitment and retention of staff.

The school, in particular the owner and the governing body, have not demonstrated sufficient capacity to make the many improvements that students and staff deserve. They will require significant, sustained external monitoring, support and guidance if the school is to deliver at least a satisfactory standard of education by the time of the next inspection.

## What the school should do to improve further:

---

1. As a matter of urgency clarify the roles and responsibilities of the owner and improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
  - i. devolving operational decision making and budgetary control aligned to the school development plan, to the senior leadership team
  - ii. seek external training and guidance to develop the governing body's strategic role as 'critical friends'
  - iii. appointing and retaining high quality staff; particularly a substantive principal and middle leaders who can effectively monitor the quality of teaching and raise academic standards
  - iv. ensuring that any further expansion is carefully staged and phased and does not compromise the very recent fragile improvements.
2. Improve teaching and learning so that a greater proportion of lessons secure at least satisfactory progress in KG by:
  - i. providing teachers with further training and opportunities to observe good practice in other schools

- ii. broadening the variety of learning activities so that children develop a wider range of skills
  - iii. developing the skills of teaching assistants to effectively support student learning.
3. Improve the quality of teaching and learning at whole school level, particularly for SEN, the more able and EAL speakers by:
- i. ensuring behaviour is consistently managed
  - ii. disseminate the better practice emerging in mathematics and ICT
  - iii. linking learning to real-life practical applications to ensure that it is relevant and engaging
  - iv. increasing the pace of lessons and setting time limits for activities
  - v. increasing the range of teaching strategies, to ensure students are active and develop thinking, investigative and creative skills
  - vi. ensuring that students' work is marked regularly and they understand how to improve
4. Improve the facilities and resources by:
- i. increasing the range and quality of resources in all classrooms, especially primary, KG, science and ICT
  - ii. improving the library resources in order to provide sufficient reading material and computer access to enhance the development of literacy and research skills.
5. Strengthen implementation of the curriculum by:
- i. providing regular opportunities for students to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, particularly higher order thinking, collaboration and independence
  - ii. enriching the curriculum through a range of social, cultural, scientific and sporting activities and events.

## 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: <b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>      |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |