



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



Summary Inspection Report

Dar al Uloom Private School-Al Ain

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Inspection Date	19 th – 22 nd February 2012
School ID#	186
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education
Number of Students	1085
Age Range	KG – Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Dalal Mohammed Adieb
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Introduction

The school was inspected by four inspectors. They observed 60 lessons, attended meetings with senior staff and students, completed a scrutiny of students' work, and analysed data and school documents.

Description of the School

Dar al Uloom Private School is purpose-built and opened in 1999 in the busy area of School Street. The principal has been in post since the opening of the school. The site includes a boys' section, a girls' section and a primary section with a kindergarten (KG). There are 41 children in the kindergarten, 206 students in the primary section, 368 in the middle school and 450 in the upper school. There are 488 boys and 597 girls. The school is part of a federation of six schools and teaches the approved MoE programme in all phases, with the introduction of English language from the beginning of KG. It is designated as a science and art school for students in grades 11 and 12. Almost all students are Muslim and of Arabic heritage, mainly originating from Egypt, Sudan or Jordan, with a minority of local Emiratis. All teachers are from the Middle East. They work in collaboration with other local schools, especially the five other schools in the Ibn Ham federation. Teachers' salaries range from AED 27000 to 36000 per annum.

The school aims to provide a safe, attractive environment for the school family that encourages students' personal development so that they become confident leaders with the academic skills to reach excellent standards. It aims to develop creativity and critical thinking skills, to assist students with special educational needs through high-quality teaching, and to promote a sense of loyalty to one's country and religion.

The school caters mainly for middle-income families. Annual fees, including transport, are low compared to other local schools. They are AED 4600 for children in KG, AED 5260 for primary students, AED 5920 for middle and AED 7900 for upper school students.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged Dar Uloom School to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

Since its last inspection little progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses that were identified. Leaders and managers are not driving school improvement to raise standards and there are inequalities between the boys' and the girls' sections. There is no vice-principal in the boys' section. The vice-principal

of the girls' section currently has the responsibility for both sections and this has a damaging impact on the leadership of the school. She has little support from middle leaders, who have poorly defined roles and responsibilities. There is no defined subject co-ordinator role, and little classroom monitoring takes place to check the impact of staff development and training on students' achievement in lessons. There is no clear, strategic vision for raising standards and for improving teaching, accommodation and resources. The school has limited capacity to improve further.

The school has not yet implemented a standardised testing system, as was recommended by the previous inspection. Assessment is limited to marking the tests, and does not make clear how well students are progressing, particularly in the development of their skills. Underachieving students are not identified and supported so that they gain test results in line with their peers. The lack of effective assessment makes it impossible to analyse progress by different groups, for example of boys compared to girls. Little use is made of the test results by individual teachers to inform their planning.

Academic standards and progress appear to be satisfactory when compared to other schools that follow the same curriculum; however, they fall far short of international expectations. In Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies, students make satisfactory progress as measured by the very limited parameters of the MoE curriculum. Their basic knowledge of and ability to recite the Qur'an and read Al Fateha are secure, and their understanding and appreciation of UAE culture are satisfactory. In English, mathematics and science, standards and rates of progress are unsatisfactory and well below international expectations; students are learning content and not developing the skills they need in these subjects. More able students are not challenged to meet their potential, and say they are bored repeating the same topics each year. Many teachers are not fluent users of English and this has a detrimental impact on students' speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. The English language is not used in other lessons, reducing the opportunities for students to develop their vocabulary and fluency in English.

Students showed confidence when they shared their knowledge and ideas and led the daily whole school assemblies. They are usually respectful to each other and to their teachers. All nationalities work well together. There is a general climate of kindness and mutual respect amongst students. Students are keen to improve their learning environment and curriculum, and were very capable of discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their school with the inspection team.

The school does not effectively promote students' personal skills or qualities, such as, independent thinking or problem-solving abilities. There are few opportunities

for students to demonstrate leadership skills, contribute to the school or wider community, or participate in activities that enrich their education. The lack of sports and extra-curricular activities hampers healthy living and social development. Occasionally, disrespectful behaviour occurs when students lack supervision, or when they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.

From KG onwards teachers provide mostly lecture style lessons, so students remember facts but do not develop understanding and skills. The teachers' appropriate academic qualifications are not matched by their knowledge of how to teach their subject. They have had very little relevant professional development, and many of their practices are out of date and inappropriate for delivering the best international education. Teachers do not build on what individual students know, understand and can do to ensure that they develop the skills to be successful learners. Students listen well but teachers give them few opportunities to develop their collaborative, creative, technological and thinking skills. There is an entry test for KG children to assess readiness to learn, which shows a wide range of abilities in all year groups. The failure of teachers to take account of this in their planning contributes significantly to students' limited progress, as does the traditional teaching methods based on the content of undemanding textbooks. This results, for example, in children in 3

the KG not being provided play based learning opportunities that would enable them explore, experiment, and cooperate. Assessment is limited to tests at the end of units and does not enable teachers to match their teaching to students' learning needs. Marking does not provide students with useful guidance on how to improve their work.

Lessons were seen where teachers used different teaching styles to involve students more actively in their learning. In grade 10 science lessons, for example, students were leading the learning with presentations, and were able to answer questions from their classmates on different habitats. In grade 11 English, students were discussing the use of prefixes in groups. This style of teaching is the exception rather than the rule across all grades. More typically, teachers do not understand what they need to do in the classroom to promote effective learning, or how to measure the impact their teaching has on students' achievement. There are very few changes to staff. Although this provides stability and continuity from year to year, teachers have few opportunities to update their teaching skills and there is no influx of enthusiastic teachers bringing new ideas to the school.

The school complies with the minimum number of hours required for teaching Arabic, UAE history and Islamic studies. However, the curriculum lacks breadth and does not make clear how students' learning, especially their skills, will be

developed one step at a time. Art provision is better in the girls' section, as is PE. There is no provision for music or other creative arts, such as drama or dance. There are few extra-curricular activities to enrich learning, and there is little within the curriculum to match the interests of the students or to make their experiences of learning exciting. The curriculum does not serve students well enough in preparing them for the future, either in terms of their practical skills or in guidance and support regarding options for future education or careers. Overall the curriculum falls well short of best international practice.

The school does not fully understand its responsibility for the support, guidance, care and welfare of students, all of which have significant weaknesses. For example, students' progress is not tracked nor are targets set for them, so many do not reach their potential. Students receive very little guidance regarding their future beyond school. The school knows the importance of checking attendance, but is not effectively addressing the issue of late arrivals in the boys' section. There is no health education.

The school accommodation and resources were areas of weakness identified by the last inspection. The school buildings, particularly in the boys' section, are unhealthy and unsafe. A number of serious concerns significantly compromise students' safety. These include: the fire doors; too few and unhygienic toilets; inadequate safety on school transport; lax security that means that intruders can enter the school unchecked and no regular checks on electrical equipment. There is no health and safety officer to perform regular risk assessments. All of these expose students to unnecessary risk. The school buildings restrict the range of strategies that can be used to support learning. Classrooms are small and overcrowded and the kindergarten area is totally inappropriate to meet the needs of young children. Basic classroom resources to underpin the curriculum are very unsatisfactory. The school now provides high-quality computers housed in suites but has not installed interactive whiteboards in classrooms to facilitate teaching and learning. There are now more books and more science equipment but they remain too few to effectively support students' independent learning. Specialist rooms have little equipment for the teaching of science, art, music or physical education, and the inadequately stocked library is not used well enough to develop advanced learning skills.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by:
 - i. establishing a programme of professional development that shows teachers how students learn, and how to develop a range of teaching and learning techniques such as group work, open questioning and problem solving;
 - ii. providing students with high quality materials and equipment in all subjects, including ICT facilities in classrooms and books to read for enjoyment and research.
 - iii. introducing a meaningful system of assessment that helps teachers to benchmark standards internationally and prepares students for their next steps in learning and uses descriptions of what students are expected to achieve at every level to enable leaders to track the progression of skills; and
 - iv. improving the competence in English, particularly spoken English, of both staff and students.
2. Improve the quality and accountability of leaders and managers at all levels by:
 - i. establishing the role of subject co-ordinator and provide appropriate training so that all leaders fully understand their roles and responsibilities, and are able to track individual students' progress against challenging targets;
 - ii. securing time for these co-ordinators to perform their role, and be involved in drawing up a school development plan;
 - iii. introducing a system of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so that subject co-ordinators can rigorously and accurately assess the quality of teaching and the progress students make; and
 - iv. ensuring a clear focus for lesson observations so that new teaching and learning methods are monitored and evaluated and good practice is shared.
3. Move away from a curriculum based exclusively on textbooks, and establish a broad and balanced curriculum for all grades in the school at the earliest opportunity by:
 - i. creating a stimulating KG curriculum with more opportunities for children to develop language skills through play, numeracy skills through using counting and construction equipment to develop concepts of number, size and shape, and to choose activities to explore the world around them;

- ii. enhancing the curriculum to develop students' creative and physical skills, and contribute to their personal development;
 - iii. introducing appropriate external examinations to offer choices to students, and prepare them well for the next stage of their education in the UAE or elsewhere in the world; and
 - iv. involving the older students in creating a programme of daily activities for all students, both to enrich the curriculum and to develop leadership skills.
4. Urgently address health and safety hazards and ensure all ADEC recommendations are met:
- i. appoint a health and safety officer with the responsibility of keeping the school site, students and staff safe at all times;
 - ii. ensure all buses are fitted with safety belts, which are used correctly;
 - iii. undertake regular risk assessments, and electrical equipment checks;
 - iv. improve toilet cleanliness and facilities; and
 - v. ensure fire doors are unlocked at all times during the school day.