



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



Inspection Report

Diyafah International School

Academic Year 2014 – 2015

iqraa

Diyafah International School

Inspection Date	11 – 14 May 2015
School ID#	233
Licensed Curriculum	English National Curriculum
Number of Students	701
Age Range	3 to 13 years
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Lawrence Fray
School Address	Mohammed Bin Zayed City, Plot 4, Zone 13, Abu Dhabi
Telephone Number	+971 (0)2 558 5665
Fax Number	+971 (0)2 558 5455
Official Email (ADEC)	AlDiyafah.Pvt@adec.ac.ae
School Website	www.diyafahinternationalschool.com
Date of last inspection	12 – 15 May 2014

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 B;	GRADE 4
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The main strengths of the school are:

- students' personal development, their behaviour and attitudes to learning
- relationships across the school create a positive ethos
- the quality of the care, guidance and support students receive
- premises create a good environment for learning.
- the quality of self-evaluation and monitoring systems to improve teaching and learning
- the positive partnership with parents
- improving student attendance levels.

The main areas for improvement are:

- students' individual academic needs, especially for the more able and those students identified as having special educational needs
 - students' understanding of their learning and what they need to do next to improve.
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Introduction

The school was evaluated by 4 inspectors who observed 80 lessons and conducted several meetings with the principal, senior staff, students and parents. Inspectors analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work, listened to students read and collated the responses to 200 parents' questionnaires. They considered the school's policies, procedures and documentation and observed assemblies, after school clubs, and arrival and departure procedures. The principal and senior leaders were involved throughout the process and conducted 9 joint observations with inspectors.

Description of the School

Diyafah International School is in the Mohammed Bin Zayed City area of Abu Dhabi. It opened in September 2013 as a new school catering for students from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 7. The current principal took over in February 2015. The Diyafah Group provides governance, with links to the sister school in Dubai. Part of the school's mission is a commitment to 'a holistic based education in a caring and enlightened environment'. The core values of the vision statement include development of critical and creative thinking and leadership.

The school follows the English National Curriculum (ENC). There are 701 students, 250 in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), 256 in primary and 195 in secondary. Of the total numbers, 58% are boys and 72% are Muslim. There are 10 different nationalities represented in the school population: 31% are Emirati, 9% are Indian and Pakistani each, 7% are American, 6% are British, 5% are Jordanian and the smaller percentages are from a range of other backgrounds. Students are taught in mixed gender classes up until Year 4. There are 43 students identified with special educational needs (SEN): including specific and moderate learning difficulties. The majority of students speak English as an additional language (EAL). The admission policy is inclusive and as yet no external tests have been taken.

There are 57 teachers, 25 support staff, 2 for care, 14 administrative assistants, 3 technical staff and 4 security guards, 3 of whom are out sourced. Fees range from AED 24,200 to AED 32,000 per year, excluding uniform and transport. These are in the affordable to medium category.

The Effectiveness of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness

The school provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education; this is a significant improvement from the last inspection when the school was judged to be unsatisfactory. The new leadership team has already made an impact on creating a positive ethos, improving personal development and behaviour, and ensuring assessment of students' achievement is accurate and used to inform future learning. The partnership with parents is positive and they are supportive of the school. The curriculum implementation now more closely meets the needs of students. Teachers plan to meet the range of abilities in classes and are beginning to extend and support learning as appropriate towards developing 21st century skills.

Students' attainment & progress

Attainment and progress are satisfactory. Students' meet age related expectations in all subjects and their progress is satisfactory and improving in most areas. Progress is strongest in the subjects taught in English. Progress for those students who find learning difficult or are more able is satisfactory. In some lessons, insufficient differentiation means their progress is not sufficiently accelerated.

Children start school in EYFS with a wide range of skills and few speak English. Their progress is developing and basic skills are about what might be expected for this age group, particularly for additional language learners. Children in the foundation stage have a working knowledge of phonics, which means they can successfully blend and segment simple words.

Standards in English in reading, writing, speaking and listening are broadly at expected levels and progress is improving. In Years 1-3, there is a broad range of attainment. Girls' reading skills in Year 7 are less well developed than those of boys because there is a higher proportion of girls for whom English is an additional language. In the older years, there is better progress because teaching sets higher expectations and provides more appropriate support. The best progress is seen in extended and creative writing when students are secure in their basic skills.

In Arabic, younger students can identify the letters they have learned, link these to relevant illustrations and can write simple words. Their handwriting is neat and legible; their dictation is not as well developed. They are not able to write creatively and in reading some skills are underdeveloped as they cannot apply

grammar rules, 'Tashkeel'. They are not always confident enough to demonstrate their skills in speaking standard Arabic. In Islamic education, younger students are able to understand the sayings of the Prophet's (PBUH) 'Hadeeth', memorise short 'Suras' (Qur'anic verses) from the Holy Qur'an and reflect on the qualities of Muslims and Islamic values. Older students are not always able to consistently apply the correct recitation rules. In social studies, students have a secure knowledge and understanding of the diversity of UAE society, heritage and traditions. They are not able to explain patriotism or economic development in any detail.

In mathematics, students develop a satisfactory knowledge of number and a developing sense of shape, space and measurement. For example in Year 2, students confidently work out which units of measurement they should choose to measure the length of the outlines of their feet and make comparisons. They are less sure when dealing with larger measurements. Progression is evident as students show an understanding of mathematical symbols and place value to estimate and solve calculations. Older students in Year 6, use coordinates to transpose a geometrical shape anti-clockwise using 4 quadrants.

In science Year 7 students can predict, hypothesise and reach conclusions. In Year 5 students use enquiry skills to investigate water resistance, using appropriate group targets for their age. This is the least developed aspect in science as opportunities to develop independence in investigation are restricted by the use of 'virtual' experiments. For example, in a Year 4 class, students had to assess electrical dangers from the smart board and in Year 1 students assessed properties of materials, without handling or testing these.

Systems to accurately assess students' attainment and progress are being developed. Progress is tracked regularly and current information now gives a more accurate reflection of what they can do and understand.

Students' personal development

Personal development is satisfactory and improving. Students confidently approach adults and secure a positive response. They offer suggestions in most lessons. They do not receive similar kind of encouragement by teachers in all lessons and students' attitudes to their learning can be passive at times. They usually engage in learning and say they enjoy school. The few instances of bullying are effectively dealt with. Students' behaviour and demeanour suggests they understand the difference between right and wrong and no instances of disruptive attitudes were noted. The culture and values of UAE heritage are acknowledged and promoted around the school and in lessons. There is also an

emerging sense of mutual respect and an awareness that actions result in consequences. Students are usually polite and well mannered, including towards visitors.

There are opportunities for games and students are mostly energetic and active and know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They are fairly sociable, but the opportunities to take on leadership roles, be innovative, use their initiative and be instigators in their own learning are not developed sufficiently well. Attendance has improved and is just above average at 92%.

The quality of teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors observed lessons that ranged from very good to unsatisfactory; a large majority were deemed at least satisfactory; the more effective teaching was mainly seen in English, mathematics and science. Teachers usually deliver lessons that are based on an increasingly accurate assessment of students' knowledge and skill levels. They differentiate learning by providing tasks and activities matched to students' needs. This practice is not embedded fully across the school. In most year groups, questions are used effectively to encourage extended responses and give students reasonable opportunities to think critically and explore ideas.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and build positive relationships with students. Those identified as having SEN receive satisfactory support, either individually or in small groups. In the youngest classes, there is a secure and developing appreciation of how children learn through play. Staff interact with the children, ask them questions and listen to what they say. The children know the routines, which give them a sense of security and helps develop their personal independence. This approach has clear benefits for the children's learning.

In Arabic and sometimes in social studies, teachers do not differentiate learning enough to make it sufficiently interesting, relevant and meaningful. This means learning is not as rapid as it could be. Students listen to their teachers; they are not able to discuss and share their ideas as much as they should. In Islamic education, there is some good teaching, with evidence of differentiation and assessment for learning. There is satisfactory use of opportunities to consider Islamic teachings and to make decisions based on an understanding of the consequences of actions.

In English, teachers successfully engage students in learning sessions to practise the use of phonics, making creative use of a range of resources. This is not embedded across the phase. In mathematics, lessons have a distinct sense of purpose that transmits to the students who respond to the challenge. Time is

given to consolidate skills and there is usually a fairly secure match of tasks to the needs of the students; pace and challenge are sometimes lacking. In science, teachers link prior learning to the work in most lessons and review students' understanding. In the most effective lessons students have opportunities to investigate and experiment, making sensible predictions and hypotheses.

Marking of students' work is improving and in Years 2, 3 and 5 there are some good examples which make clear the next steps in students' learning.

Meeting students' needs through the curriculum

The implementation of the curriculum is satisfactory and improving. It has breadth, balance and is made purposeful for the younger children. Planning of the curriculum considers the relevance of topics to students and their personal and social education. The curriculum promotes basic skills in English and Arabic, numeracy and science effectively.

Some good cross-curricular links are developing for example between literacy and a history topic on the Greeks. Artwork is also used to make links to mathematics such as when studying Mondrian. Most students are interested in their work and motivated by the curriculum, which has continuity and progression across age groups. Independence and personal skills are promoted, especially in the early years, with the expected range of activities to enable the children to initiate their own play.

The curriculum planning and delivery meets the needs of students well, and are preparing them for their futures effectively. Suitable links are fostered with other organisations. There is a wealth of comprehensive clubs which are well-attended, as well as other extracurricular activities including field and residential trips and a science week.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students

The protection, care, guidance and support of students is satisfactory and improving. The school successfully promotes a positive, caring ethos. A range of assessment data has been collated in recent months. This is increasingly used to identify the specific next steps in learning for different groups of students. There is a clinic, overseen by a nurse and arrangements for first aid are secure. Systems to deal with behaviour and any bullying are securely in place. The school makes suitable checks on adults who work in the school.

There are systems in place to ensure the improved attendance figures are maintained. There are suitable arrangements for students to pray.

The quality of the school's buildings and premises

The school's buildings and premises are good. The plot is large and there are plans for future building work. There are sufficient classrooms for the current school population. The school has rooms for science, art and design, computing and music. The school makes good use of the available space for assemblies and outdoor activities. The building is relatively new, well maintained, clean and the accommodation is in good condition. The EYFS rooms are spacious and used effectively. There is no direct access to outdoor areas to support learning, although some activities are offered outside. Older year groups are in a separate building where there is a canteen. There are lifts in both buildings, to allow access for students with physical needs. No health and safety concerns were noted and the building is kept clean.

There are effective procedures for moving about the building safely and fire drills take place regularly. There is a designated person who has the responsibility for ensuring the building is well maintained.

The school's resources to support its aims

Resources are satisfactory and improving, with an increasing range and quality to support effective delivery of the curriculum. Resources promote basic skills in English, mathematics and science. Some promote active, practical learning and technology is available to aid teaching and support learning. There are enough suitably qualified competent teachers, with support staff in some classes. Teaching assistants do not consistently support learning and sometimes act as supervisors.

The science rooms have a range of equipment and resources, and there are appropriate facilities for physical education (PE). The range of books in the library is sufficient in the English language, resources to develop reading and writing are used well. There are not enough books in Arabic. The resources for music and art are good and there are some specific resources to support SEN. The science laboratory is used well in the upper years. The most effective lessons in the lower years use resource boxes to plan experiments. The school has suitable procedures and systems in place to ensure that transportation arrangements are good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. A whole school ethos is emerging which is cohesive and collegiate. The principal, with the support of staff, has demonstrated a systematic drive to improve the school. Leadership has created a stable learning environment with suitable working conditions. There is also a determination to ensure all those in the school are held accountable for

the students' education. Behaviour management has been successfully tackled and staff now apply strategies consistently. The partnership with parents is positive, most feel they have regular updates on their children's learning and are content with the quality of education.

There is a shared set of values and a vision that has been reinforced by a whole school approach to self-evaluation and school development planning. The judgments in the self-evaluation document (SEF) are candid, realistic and logical. The SEF informs the school development plan (SDP) effectively. This is now underpinned by an increasingly accurate analysis of data. Senior and middle managers have a clear view of what needs to be done, based on an honest analysis of the school's relative strengths and aspects for development. They have a genuine commitment to the students and feel empowered and supported by leadership and governance. They welcome the benefits of the changes that have taken place recently in improving learning.

Senior and middle management has an effective role in monitoring lessons with a rigorous system of lesson observations, feedback to teachers and analysis of students' work. There have been improvements in learning and progress in Islamic education, English, mathematics and science. The regular continuous professional development (CPD) sessions are having an impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Leadership acknowledges the way forward is to further accelerate academic progress. Much headway has already been made in adopting a rigorous approach to the use of accurate assessment data and a greater focus on academic progress when judging the quality of lessons.

Progress since the last inspection

Progress made on the recommendations raised by the last inspection is good as all aspects were graded unsatisfactory. The previous report judged that improvements were required to the impact of leadership, the quality of teaching and delivery of the curriculum. Senior leaders now monitor lessons more effectively and the curriculum is more closely aligned with the requirements of the ENC. As a result, academic achievement has improved. The improvements are particularly evident in the EYFS, where children are settled and acquire secure skills in personal independence. The children learn through play, and the effective support enables them to develop satisfactory language skills in both Arabic and English.

The school has made considerable efforts in the last few months to address the deficit in school assessment data and ensure this is now of an acceptable quality.

This is having a positive impact on students' progress. There is an active approach to developing teachers' expertise, based on an audit of what they feel are the main aspects of teaching to be improved in moving the school forward. Students' personal development has improved and there is now a calm atmosphere.

Senior leaders have demonstrated that the school has good capacity to secure further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Continue to improve teaching and learning so more lessons result in at least good progress by:
 - i. refining assessment for learning to provide greater levels of differentiation to meet a range of needs
 - ii. creating greater challenge for those students who make progress quickly
 - iii. providing more specific support for those students identified as having SEN
 - iv. ensuring that teaching assistants effectively support students' learning.
 - v. setting meaningful and challenging targets to accelerate progress for all groups of students, in particular in the middle and upper years in primary grades.
2. Raise attainment and progress in all subjects, particularly in Arabic and social studies by:
 - i. significantly increasing active participation in lessons and encouraging an interactive, investigational and research approach to learning
 - ii. implementing the marking policy consistently, using examples of good practice and ensuring students acknowledge comments and are aware of the next steps to improve their work.

Inspection Grades

Performance Standard	Band A High performing			Band B Satisfactory		Band C In need of significant improvement		
	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								