



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



Private School Inspection Report

Emirates Falcon International School

Academic Year 2015 – 2016

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Emirates Falcon International School

Inspection Date	26 – 29 October 2015
Date of previous inspection	20 – 23 January 2014

General Information		Students	
School ID	153	Total number of students	760
Opening year of school	2007	Number of children in KG	141
Principal	Antwaneet Nasrallah	Number of students in other phases	Primary 384 Middle 179 High 56
School telephone	+971 (0)3 780 6668	Age range	3 years 8 months to 17 years
School Address	Al Ain, Falaj Hazza, P.O. Box 68338	Grades or Year Groups	KG – Grade 12
Official email (ADEC)	emiratesfalcon.pvt@adec.ae	Gender	Mixed
School Website	falconschool.somee.com	% of Emirati Students	74%
Fee range (per annum)	AED 20,000- AED 27,500	Largest nationality groups (%)	1. UAE (74%) 2. Jordan (7%) 2. Syria (6%)
Licensed Curriculum		Staff	
Main Curriculum	American	Number of teachers	77
Other Curriculum		Number of Teaching Assistants (TAs)	6
External Exams/ Standardised tests	CCS MAP tests , External Measurement of Student Achievement (EMSA)	Teacher-student ratio	1:14 KG/ FS 1:9 Other phases
Accreditation	North Central Association – (NCA) Advanced	Teacher turnover	13%

Introduction

Inspection activities	
Number of inspectors deployed	4
Number of inspection days	4
Number of lessons observed	100
Number of joint lesson observations	6
Number of parents' questionnaires	87; (return rate: 13.5%)
Details of other inspection activities	Inspectors conducted several meetings with the principal, senior staff, middle leaders, teachers, support staff, students, parents, and Board members. They analysed test and assessment results, scrutinised students' work across the school, and considered many of the school's policies and other documents.

School	
School Aims	'To develop a readiness for life-long learning, a loyalty to students' own culture and religion, and a respect for those of others.'
School vision and mission	'To provide high quality learning in an environment that equips students with a sense of responsibility and self-confidence.'
Admission Policy	The school accepts students from the local area and from the wider community. There are no specific requirements for entry to the school.
Leadership structure (ownership, governance and management)	The school is overseen by a Board of Trustees. The senior leadership team comprises the principal and an academic development director. They are supported by an extended middle management team.

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	0	2
Emotional and Behaviour Disorders (ED/ BD)	1	10
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	0	0
Speech and Language Disorders	2	10
Physical and health related disabilities	5	1
Visually impaired	0	0
Hearing impaired	2	4
Multiple disabilities	0	0

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

G&T Category	Number of students identified
Intellectual ability	0
Subject-specific aptitude (e.g. in science, mathematics, languages)	25
Social maturity and leadership	25
Mechanical/ technical/ technological ingenuity	15
Visual and performing arts (e.g. art, theatre, recitation)	20
Psychomotor ability (e.g. dance or sport)	50

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 (B)	Acceptable
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	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						
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The Performance of the School

Evaluation of the school's overall performance

Emirates Falcon International provides an acceptable quality of education. Senior leaders, the proprietor, and governors have set a direction that demonstrates commitment to UAE national and Abu Dhabi Emirate priorities. They have secured adequate progress across all performance standards. This is due to an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and a vision which is shared by the whole school community.

The academic achievement of students in core subjects is now broadly in line with national and international standards. This is due to the improving quality of teaching and the curriculum, opportunities to develop a range of learning skills, the good personal development of students, and strengths in the quality of care and support which they receive. Leadership and management are strong and provide the school with stability and clear strategic direction. A range of resources and suitably designed premises support the effective delivery of the curriculum.

Progress made since last inspection and capacity to improve

All of the inspection recommendations have been addressed carefully, with clear resulting improvement. The leadership team, with the support of the whole staff, has laid solid foundations, based upon a common understanding of the school's priorities. They are passionate about learning and strive for the very best. The school has made acceptable progress in raising students' levels of attainment to match international and national standards across all subjects. Students' increasingly competent use of English as they move up the school enables them to access the curricular demands of science and mathematics. Since the last inspection the school has focused upon the professional development of teachers to help them see the need for differentiation and a variety of teaching and learning approaches in their lessons. Although these areas are now part of planning by most teachers, they are not yet a consistently effective feature of lessons.

The preconditions for accelerated development are now in place. More emphasis on the monitoring of teaching and learning, effective implementation of curriculum changes in the classroom, and identification of the factors underlying high achievement are now required for the school to move to the next stage of development.

Development and promotion of innovation skills

The school has an increasing focus upon innovation. Students regularly participate in competitions both locally and within the region. Although this focus is reflected in curriculum planning, students do not yet have consistent opportunities for active

use of enquiry, critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills across all lessons. Some promising examples of tasks designed to encourage active and collaborative learning were seen in different subjects and phases and in ‘Genius Hour’ for lower school students.

The inspection identified the following as key areas of strength:

- senior leaders’ vision and strategic actions to improve the school
- students’ personal development and their appreciation of Emirati culture and heritage, and Islamic values
- procedures to care for, protect, and support students, including those with special educational needs, which help keep them safe
- opportunities for children in the Kindergarten to become independent learners
- students’ work ethic, collaboration and independent learning skills
- teachers’ willingness to embrace change.

The inspection identified the following as key areas for improvement:

- marking and feedback to students on how to improve their work
- adapting the curriculum in lessons to match the abilities of different groups, especially the gifted and talented
- a minority of teachers’ expectations of what students can achieve
- a minority of leaders’ ability to accurately assess learning in lessons and provide effective feedback to teachers on how to improve
- students’ writing skills in English, especially those of middle school boys.

Performance Standard 1: Students' Achievement

Students' achievement Indicators		KG	Primary	Middle	High
Islamic Education	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a First Language)	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Arabic (as a Second Language)	Attainment	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Progress	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Social Studies	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
English	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Weak	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Mathematics	Attainment	Weak	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Science	Attainment	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
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	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Progress	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Learning Skills (including innovation, creativity, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving and collaboration)		Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable



Students' attainment and progress are acceptable and improving across all subject areas. Evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and test data analysis indicate that standards are broadly in line with age-related, national, and international expectations. Standards have improved in Arabic, Islamic education, and social studies since the last inspection and are now in line with national expectations. In English, mathematics, and science, attainment is broadly in line with international standards, having risen slightly. Students' basic skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, thinking, and use of information and communication technology (ICT) are acceptable. An exception is in boys' writing skills which are weaker in the middle school.

Students with special educational needs (SEN) make similar progress to their peers due to the effective support and monitoring they receive. Those who are gifted and talented also make similar progress to their peers. They do not yet consistently receive sufficient challenge across all lessons to help accelerate their learning further. The gap between boys and girls achievement has narrowed over the last three years because the school has analysed this carefully and taken effective action. Lesson observations during the inspection showed no significant overall difference in rates of progress between girls and boys. The school's rigorous analysis of data on attainment and progress is focused upon the performance of individual students rather than upon the monitoring and analysis of the performance of different groups.

Almost all children enter Kindergarten (KG) with little or no English. Priority is rightly given to personal development and communication skills through language and literacy. Consequently, most children make acceptable progress in these areas and are increasingly able to access other areas of the curriculum. Teachers' assessment procedures are thorough and provide detailed assessment information for each child. Most children are working broadly in line with international age-related expectations by the end of KG2.

In Islamic education and Arabic, attainment is in line with expectations for schools following the same curriculum. By the time they reach middle school, for example, most students are aware of Islamic values and show an understanding of how to apply these in their everyday lives. What they learn is reflected in their good behaviour. In Arabic, speaking, listening and reading skills are more developed than writing skills for most students. In social studies, most students have an age-appropriate understanding of the history and geography of the region.

Almost all students learn English as an additional language. Overall, they make acceptable progress across the school phases. Most acquire confident listening, speaking, and reading skills, for example reading short stories and poems by the end of primary school. They express themselves clearly in analysing different kinds of text



and using figurative language by the end of middle school. By Grade 11, most are able to read different genres, including the works of famous authors and playwrights, with understanding. Progress in reading has been supported by a focus on effective use of the well-stocked library and additional support from teachers at the start of the school day. Progress in writing skills is not as strong, especially for boys in the middle school, because there are limited opportunities for extended writing.

Most students make acceptable progress in mathematics and science, using their language skills to grasp new concepts securely. In mathematics, for example, children can count well and recognise simple shapes by the end of KG, use simple algebraic formulae by the end of primary school, and work out formulae for finding number patterns by the end of middle school. In high school, they are able to solve appropriately complex problems, for example in multiplying factors within equations. In science, students demonstrate an understanding of the scientific process in experiments and practical work such as dissection. They use appropriate scientific vocabulary accurately, for example in discussing the difference between instinct and behaviour.

Students' development of independent and collaborative learning skills is acceptable. When they are required to work independently or with their peers most do this with diligence and maturity. These opportunities are not yet consistent across all lessons. ICT skills across the school are developed well, because students regularly use the well-equipped computer laboratory, as well as having access to robotics equipment in the Saturday Club, and iPads for use in classrooms.

Students are making acceptable progress in developing their learning skills, including those of critical thinking, problem-solving, use of learning technologies, and collaboration skills. In the best lessons and in some activities outside lessons, they are given well-judged opportunities to work independently, collaborate with their peers, pursue lines of research, and use digital technology to support, enhance or extend their learning. Opportunities of this kind are not yet of consistently high quality across the school.

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	Good
Understanding of Islamic values and awareness of Emirati and world cultures	Good	Good	Good	Good
Social responsibility and innovation skills	Good	Good	Good	Good

The personal development of students is good. Because they enjoy school, the students demonstrate a consistently positive attitude towards school life and their learning. Children in KG and Grade 1 are lively and enthusiastic learners. Relationships between staff and students are a strength of the school. Almost all students show high levels of respect for each other and their teachers, courtesy towards visitors, and a well-developed sense of right and wrong. This is largely due to effective modelling by teachers, the care they demonstrate towards their students, and the whole school emphasis on together being part of a learning 'family'.

Almost all students say that they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. The school's policy on behaviour emphasizes the role of rewards, and sets out clear values and rules that almost all students appreciate and follow. Consequently behaviour is good. Attendance, at 95%, is also good because the majority of students recognise the link between their attendance and achievement.

Most students have an awareness of how to live healthy lifestyles. They recognise the importance of eating healthily and exercising regularly, and participate in activities which promote their physical fitness and well-being.

Students possess a clear appreciation and understanding of Islamic values and their heritage and culture because the school takes every opportunity to celebrate these. This is done for example, through assemblies and regular activities in a specially erected traditional Arab tent that contains artefacts from Emirati culture. Students' clear understanding of Islamic values is accompanied by a developing understanding and respect for the views and needs of others who live in cultures different from their own. This is strengthened by activities such as culture days and opportunities for independent research.

Most students have a positive work ethic and are developing independent and innovative skills well because they enjoy these aspects of their learning. They assume responsibility willingly, for example in helping younger students in lessons and at break, in representing their peers on the School Council, and in ensuring the school environment is kept clean.

Performance Standard 3: Teaching and Assessment

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now acceptable. This is due to a sustained focus on professional development. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge, which ensures they are well prepared for lessons. They plan their lessons appropriately so that their knowledge is shared clearly and at a suitable level with students, using pertinent examples to help them understand. In most lessons, positive relationships and a range of questions, teaching strategies and resources ensure most students are appropriately challenged and supported. As a result, they make acceptable progress. Where a minority of teachers rely too heavily on textbooks, students have insufficient opportunity to make choices about their learning or to learn independently.

In a minority of lessons, teachers set higher expectations for their students and challenge them to give thoughtful and considered responses to probing questioning. Consequently, the students respond with heightened interest and make good progress in their learning. In a Grade 3 science lesson on adaptation for example, careful questioning by the teacher on the differences between instinct and behaviour resulted in high levels of engagement and thinking from almost all students.

Professional development for teachers has made all aware of the different abilities within their class. Most teachers plan to match learning activities to the needs of three broad bands of ability. Some achieve this successfully, but this practice is not fully established. Consequently the most able and gifted and talented students do not consistently receive sufficient challenge, and less able and SEN students sometimes lack the support they need.

Professional development has also focused upon making teachers aware of ways of developing students' critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, and independent learning skills. In a few lessons, students are given exciting opportunities to solve problems, think critically, and approach a challenge creatively. For example, in a Grade 9 mathematics lesson, all students became totally engrossed in attempting to produce a solution to the challenge of using two unscaled containers of different quantities of water to measure out one cup of water exactly. Although most teachers consider these skills in their planning, they are not consistently established in classroom practice. A minority of teachers are overly directive and do not allow students to take ownership of their own learning.

Assessment is acceptable. The school keeps extensive records of the progress of individual students in developing their skills. Classroom assessment practice is securely based upon curriculum rubrics. Information from standardised assessments provides an accurate baseline from which to measure progress. Assessment of different students' progress during the course of a lesson is not established practice. Students have limited involvement in assessing their own work or that of their peers in order to identify the next steps in their learning. Marking is not used consistently to provide comments which help students to improve their work.

Performance Standard 4: Curriculum

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

The design, implementation, and adaptation of the curriculum is acceptable overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced to Grade 9 and effectively follows the school's licensed curriculum and national requirements. Additional opportunities which include music, art, physical education (PE), ICT and French enrich students' learning. Careful planning ensures that there is continuity and progression across the different phases of the school. Consequently the curriculum meets the needs of a large majority of students.

The KG curriculum provides a broad spectrum of curricular experiences. The children have opportunities for free play, investigation, creativity and exploration. There are fewer opportunities for child-initiated activities. The MoE curriculum planning and

delivery provides structure and support for those subjects taught in Arabic. The curriculum for non-Arabic subjects is based upon the use of the American Common Core Standards (CCS). Staff are well trained and confident in use of the relevant rubrics for measuring students' progress. A modified curriculum has recently been developed using systematically planned topics to link subjects and challenge different groups of students. It is still a work in progress as not yet fully embedded. As a result, it has had limited impact in improving students' learning through linking ideas between subjects and developing their critical thinking. Its impact upon the personal development and achievement of students has yet to be reviewed by senior staff.

From Grade 10 onwards students study Arabic, English, mathematics, ICT, business studies and the sciences. In addition they have time to further develop their literacy, numeracy and research skills. Curriculum options for older students are limited to a choice between biology and business studies.

Students enjoy and respond positively to the variety of community links and extra-curricular activities available, including chess and a range of sports clubs. Their academic and personal development is enhanced as a result. The curriculum is particularly strong at fostering students' understanding of Emirati culture and UAE society. National Days, for example, are celebrated with great joy, and students regularly visit the Arab tent and its artefacts at the front of the school to take part in different activities related to Emirati culture.

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	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
Care and support	Good	Good	Good	Good
The protection, care, guidance and support of students are good overall, with many strengths. The school has a very positive ethos that ensures a sense of belonging. This is a key feature of the leadership style and permeates the whole school. Assemblies constantly reinforce the sense of community. Both students and teachers feel valued as a result.				



Students benefit from high levels of care from all adults. They feel safe in school and there are few instances of bullying. The whole school approach to improving behaviour and developing positive attitudes using a reward system is followed by all staff. As a consequence, management of behaviour is very effective.

A precise and accurate child protection policy is in place and procedures are understood and followed by staff, students, and parents. The clinic is fit for purpose. Staff are attentive to the safety of students when they use school transport. All visitors are signed in and given a 'visitors' badge to clearly identify them to others around the school.

The school is well maintained. Supervisors check the building regularly and report any issues to the maintenance manager. As a result, the current buildings provide a safe physical environment which is fit for purpose for all. Secure systems are in place to monitor attendance and punctuality, with rigorous procedures to follow up persistent late arrivals and absentees. These, together with the positive system of rewards, result in good attendance and generally good punctuality, although this can be variable due to late arrival of buses.

The school has effective systems to track academic progress. Thorough systems are used to identify students with SEN and almost all are promptly and effectively supported. As a result they make personal and academic progress in line with their peers. Gifted and talented students are identified effectively and a range of opportunities are provided to support them in their development. These include roles in the Student Council, ICT access, a range of activities in sports and the performing arts, and the 'Genius Hour' in which they carry out project work related to world issues.

The well-being and personal development of students are routinely monitored. As a result, effective personal guidance and support is provided, and appropriate advice is made available on future careers, for example through visits to universities in the region. The social worker is making a positive impact and now encourages older students to think widely and creatively about their career choices. The school promotes safe and healthy living through the curriculum, although this could be planned more systematically. Students are provided with appropriate opportunities for prayer.

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	Good
Governance	Good
Management, staffing, facilities and resources	Acceptable

Leadership and management are good. The principal, strongly supported by senior and middle leaders, provides strong, principled and effective leadership. School leaders, the proprietor and governors together share a common vision for high standards and sustained improvement. As a result, the whole school 'family' has a clear sense of direction. Relationships between staff are professional and effective and morale is high.

Leaders have successfully addressed all the recommendations of the last inspection report, resulting in improvements in teaching, leadership, and achievement. There have also been significant improvements in students' personal development and the curriculum since the last inspection. The protection, care, guidance and support of students have improved and show many strengths. The self-evaluation (SEF) undertaken last academic year used evidence available at the time. The current school development plan (SDP) makes use of more recent evidence and correctly pinpoints the strategies that are likely to bring about further improvement. It identifies appropriate timelines, costing, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. The associated school action plan, prominently displayed in the entrance area, provides a clear indication to all staff of the progress currently being made. This clearly demonstrates that senior leaders have the insight, resource and determination to move forward.

The regular professional development programme is targeted on the specific needs of staff and its results are regularly monitored. Some of the impact of the programme is lost when staff move on to other schools or positions. The effectiveness of processes for the formal observation of lessons is improving. Middle and senior leaders undertake regular lesson observations. This is having positive impact upon quality. Occasionally, recommendations for improvement following lesson observations lack clarity.



The school has developed strong links with its parents. Their views are actively sought and considered when shaping school improvement priorities, and effective communication strategies keep them informed about their children's achievements and personal development. As a result, parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the quality of care it provides.

Governance is strong and well informed, and brings a range of expertise to support and challenge school leaders.

The school makes regular contributions to the local community, working for example with a number of similar schools to coordinate professional development of staff and the setting, marking and moderation of assessments. It also hosts and takes part in a number of competitions, for example a reading and writing competition for students, parents and staff, and an 'Unlimited Creativity' competition with other schools in which students teach a lesson to two members of staff.

The day to day management of the school is well organized and impacts positively on students' achievements. The school is appropriately staffed with suitably qualified staff members who benefit from regular professional development, although at the time of the inspection not all had received formal approval from ADEC in response to school requests. School leaders responded promptly and appropriately when this issue was raised on the inspection. Premises are well designed with specialist facilities including a high quality library, science and IT laboratories, and a new, high quality KG facility which supports a 'learn while playing' focus. These resources support the effective delivery of the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Improve the marking and feedback to students on how to improve their work by:
 - i. regularly marking work
 - ii. drawing on the Common Core assessment rubrics to provide students with specific feedback on what they have achieved and next steps to improve further
 - iii. developing students' skills in self and peer marking.
2. Adapt the curriculum in lessons to match the abilities of different groups, especially the gifted and talented, by:
 - i. ensuring the quality of differentiated activities in lesson plans is consistent across the school
 - ii. using questioning to assess students' progress during lessons and adapting their tasks where necessary.
3. Increase teachers' expectations of what students can achieve by:
 - i. encouraging constant checking of students' understanding and progress during lessons and providing further challenge when appropriate
 - ii. sharing best classroom practice amongst staff, for example through the use of peer observation.
4. Improve leaders' ability to accurately assess learning in lessons and provide effective feedback to teachers on how to improve by:
 - i. focusing more in lesson observations on the learning and progress different groups of students make in relation to their capabilities
 - ii. identifying appropriate tasks which teachers can use successfully to meet a range of student needs.
5. Improve students' writing skills in English, especially those of middle school boys, by:
 - i. providing more opportunities for extended writing
 - ii. increasing opportunities to write in different subjects for a variety of purposes.