



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



Summary Inspection Report

Emirates Future International Academy

Published in 2013

Iqraa

Emirates Future International Academy

Inspection Date	27 th – 30 th May, 2012
School ID#	054
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Indian - Delhi National Council for Education Research and Training (DNCERT) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
Number of Students	2774
Age Range	KG- Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Rajalaxmy Pillay
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Introduction

The school was inspected by six inspectors. They observed 95 lessons, as well as assemblies conducted each day in English, French, Hindi or Arabic. They observed playtimes and students' arrival at and departure from the school. They also held meetings with 25 senior staff members and discussions with male and female students. They analysed data and documents supplied by the school. In addition they analysed the responses from parents to a questionnaire about the school.

Description of the School

The students come largely from India (90%) and Pakistan (7%), with the remainder from Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Ethiopia. There are 535 students in the kindergarten (KG) classes, 1158 in the primary phase (grades 1 to 4), 912 in grades 5 to 10, and 169 in grades 11 and 12. Many students leave after grade 10 and return to India. The school has been granted permission to increase its fees but has decided not to implement this increase until October 2012. Fees are in the medium range but teachers' salaries are low. There are apparently significant financial incentives for parents to remove their children at age 15 so that they can be enrolled in further education settings in India. There are 168 teachers.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 7

Inspectors judged Emirates Future International Academy to be in Band C; that is a school in need of significant improvement.

The school has a positive ethos, underpinned by students' very positive attitudes to learning, but also has many significant weaknesses. At the time of the last inspection, overall effectiveness was judged to be very unsatisfactory. The main recommendations of the report were to ensure that all matters relating to child protection and health and safety were dealt with as a matter of urgency. It also highlighted the need to improve the quality of teaching and develop the role of senior and middle leaders, and to improve the curriculum and provision for KG students. In the two years since then, progress has been very slow and all of these weaknesses remain unresolved. A degree of complacency affects even the matters that should have been given the highest priority. Minimal vetting takes place of the moral character of staff, and staff members are unaware and unclear about what to do if they suspect child abuse. Fire drills have recently been introduced, but they are not rigorous enough. For example, if an incident were to occur where evacuation was necessary, an adult would first have to find the key to unlock several exit doors that are currently kept locked during the day. A fundamental problem is that no risk assessments have been undertaken, so the

senior leaders have no clear idea about the dangers to the safety of staff or students, or where they lie.

Standards are below international expectations, and significantly so in Arabic and Islamic studies. In Arabic, senior students are unable to form simple sentences. In Islamic studies, few students have memorised the Holy Qu'ran. Daily prayers are recited mechanically. Only in English do students achieve at levels approaching international expectations throughout the school, especially in listening and speaking. Students achieve their best CBSE results in this subject. In mathematics, acquisition of basic skills is hindered by the predominantly lecture-style teaching approach, which does not enable students to apply their mathematical skills in a variety of contexts. Students have no opportunities to develop their ideas about mathematics in a practical way, using resources to illustrate their thinking. In Science students gain theoretical knowledge but their attainment is unsatisfactory overall, especially in the application of scientific processes. The provision of Information and communication technology (ICT) resources has improved slightly since the last inspection, but students' ICT skills remain very weak. The school does not use any standardised testing to gain a clear picture of students' performance against other schools in an international context.

Students' progress is a little better than their attainment except in Arabic and social studies, where it is very slow. A significant reason for the difference is that the vast majority of students are from families of Indian origin, where the acquisition of knowledge is highly valued. The students come to school with attitudes and beliefs imparted to them by their parents, and which they practise on a daily basis. In Hindi and Malayalam, progress made is better than the standards reached. Apart from the upper grades in science, where students work independently to some extent under the teacher's guidance, students are not enabled to develop higher-order study and thinking skills. No students at either extreme of the ability range are specifically identified, and no provision is made to cater for their needs. As a result gifted and talented students are not challenged in lessons, and the least able students do not have any additional support to help them keep up with their classmates.

The personal development of the students is impressive. They were seen to be polite, courteous, sensitive to each other and tolerant of others' points of view. They have acquired these qualities in spite of uninspiring teaching and the cramped classroom conditions in which they work. All students appear to enjoy school life. They appreciate the multicultural ethos of the UAE and feel enriched by it. They treat fellow students and adults with respect. Even though the school environment is not fully safe, they have gained a positive understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives. They are resilient and self-motivated, and show

curiosity and enthusiasm about the subject knowledge they have gained. Despite these strengths the school does not provide them with a well-rounded curriculum, and promotes very few activities whereby they could make a positive contribution in class or to the wider community.

The school reports no difficulties with behaviour, but the low-level disruption that does occur in a few classrooms is not dealt with well enough. By simply reacting to incidents as opposed to consistently implementing rigorous agreed policies, the school is not doing enough to protect students from threats from any source. There is no prayer room for boys or girls. Given the size of the school population, the one recently appointed counsellor is not sufficient to deal with the developing workload. There are gaps in record keeping for care, guidance and support. There is now a policy for child protection, but staff members are not aware of the procedures to follow if they suspect abuse. Information about staff is stored in the school, but as yet there is no central register to present a comprehensive overview. There is no anti-bullying policy, and there are no procedures or defined strategies to deal with any related incidents that may arise. Teachers take registers of attendance daily, and notes of first-day calling to parents and reasons for absence are retained. There are rewards and sanctions for students' behaviour, but these are not clearly defined. Corporal punishment is not permitted. The clinic is well organised and effectively run. Support for career guidance is limited. The level of security at entry and exit points continues to be inconsistent.

Questioning by teachers is not focused on helping students to use their thinking and analytic skills to extend and refine the information they have received. The best practice in teaching was seen at the senior end of the school, which comprises only 6% of the total student population. No dissemination of this good practice has been undertaken to ensure consistency in effective approaches across age and grade levels, and ensure that students make the progress of which they are capable. During typical lessons, teachers focus on imparting knowledge on a whole-class basis and take no account of students' prior attainment. They tell students what the lesson will be about, but not what students should know or be able to do at the end of the lesson. As a result students are unable to evaluate their own learning and teachers do not assess if the lesson has been successful. Answering in unison is generally accepted, so the teacher has no idea if any students are falling behind. Students sit in groups, but work independently. Collaborative learning, where students work together on activities such as problem-solving and applying the knowledge gained to meaningful real-life situations, is rare. Teachers monitor written work but set no individual targets for

students, and do not encourage them to assess their own work or that of their classmates.

The teaching methods used in the KG classes are particularly inappropriate for children of this age. No efforts are made to personalise learning, or to plan to meet each child's individual care and learning needs. Teaching strategies are not integrated, involve no play or active learning, and do not refer to the immediate environment. The teaching time each day is 30 minutes short of the required four hours. Senior staff and teachers appear to have no knowledge of the profound impact that students' experiences in their early years have on their future development, their later success in school and their longer-term life chances. The students are not active participants in their own learning. The emphasis in instruction is placed on letters in words, but this is not delivered accurately to give the students the skills to blend letters to form words. Students are not therefore developing skills to help them with reading. They can copy letters, but are unable to decipher what they have written unless there is a visual prompt to help them. They can count accurately, but in the absence of practical materials and tasks, they cannot take these skills further to make calculations and solve simple problems. There is very little support for the development of investigative skills to explore the environment and the features within it, or to be creative and imaginative. Students develop hand control skills and are able to negotiate space and obstacles, but there is no specific equipment for them to use to climb, or to balance and strengthen their limbs.

The school continues to follow the DNCERT curriculum up to Grade 8, and CBSE for grades 9–12. English, science and mathematics are taught as well as Arabic, Islamic studies and social studies. Lessons are provided in Malayalam and Hindi. In addition French is taught to older students. The curriculum is not broad and balanced. It is narrowly based on textbooks, and only the knowledge-based content of the curriculum is delivered. Music, dance and drama are only experienced on important occasions. The school does not have a playground and the sporting activities offered are confined to basketball, net-cricket, table-tennis and indoor games. As a consequence, the creative and physical aspects of students' development are neglected. Overall the curriculum is an inadequate implementation of the Indian and Arabic requirements and falls well short of the best international practice.

The level of resourcing is inadequate for the number of students and contributes the weaknesses in students learning. Since the last inspection more computers have been provided in three computer laboratories. Teachers also use interactive whiteboards in many lessons, but students were not seen to use these. The three laboratories for physics, chemistry and biology are too small, and only suitable for

small groups. Resources for teaching science in classrooms are minimal. The range of reading books in the library is very limited.

The old and uninspiring school building is far too small for the student population. About 20 classrooms house 20 to 30 students each. They are significantly overcrowded, in clear violation of ADEC regulations. There is no space to move about in these classrooms and in many there is no natural light. These classrooms are simply not fit for purpose. Most classrooms have bare walls, with no displays to celebrate students' learning or support the delivery of the curriculum. Students in the KG classes generally sit in rows, with no opportunity to play or to be involved in active learning. Their only covered outdoor play area is not used, and does not contain any play equipment.

Two of the three members of the senior leadership team have been appointed in the current academic year. The principal joined in November 2011 and the primary headteacher in April 2012. Since her appointment, the principal has ensured that clear lines of communication have been set up within the school. She has organised weekly meetings with senior staff and has ensured that all teaching staff attend other weekly meetings for planning purposes. In general, considering the numbers of students and staff, the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The principal has introduced activities such as a Mother's Day celebration, which teachers say has enabled better communication with parents. Parents say they are happy with their children's education.

At all levels , including governors, senior and middle managers, and all teachers, staff display very little understanding of the educational principles that underpin the provision of a contemporary world-class education. Consequently, the emerging strategy for managing the school is narrowly focused and not informed by an understanding of the ADEC framework. The current school improvement plan lacks clear timelines and fails to identify any personnel responsible for implementation. Changes such as ensuring lesson notes are now typed have been made, but such changes have had no impact on teaching and learning. No fundamental changes have been made to ensure any significant transformation of these core activities.

The principal assigns senior staff to their duties orally, and their specific roles and responsibilities have not been put in writing. Monitoring of lessons is undertaken, but the observation schedules do not specify areas for improvement clearly enough and do not challenge observers to influence the raising of standards by linking the schedule to the ADEC inspection framework. As a result, the senior leaders are unaware of the serious weaknesses that exist in teaching. A self-evaluation form has been completed, but the grades the school assigned to

itself were unrealistic. The strategy adopted by the leaders to date has been ineffective in improving learning outcomes. For example, instructions given to teachers to ensure differentiated learning in lessons have not been implemented.

The high rate of teacher turnover presents a double problem. Many teachers return to India for various reasons. Replacement staff must constantly be retrained, and the absence of clear whole-school policies and procedures makes this unnecessarily onerous. Recent professional development workshops have not achieved the necessary changes in teaching approaches, because there is no effective follow-up monitoring to ensure their successful implementation.

Given the unsatisfactory standards achieved in a narrow curriculum that does not prepare students well enough for future life in the modern world, the school provides parents with inadequate value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Urgently address the outstanding safety and compliance issues highlighted in the previous and current inspection reports without further delay. The safety of the students is paramount.
2. Improve the effectiveness and impact of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - i. introducing standardised tests to provide realistic data about students' current levels of attainment compared to international standards, so that clear targets for improvement can be set;
 - ii. conducting honest self-evaluation linked to the ADEC inspection framework, to enable the identification of achievable time-based priorities in a strategic plan; and
 - iii. increasing the accountability of governance and senior leadership for health and safety issues and improvements in learning outcomes through continuing professional development at all levels.
3. Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school by:
 - i. increasing professional development for senior leaders and teachers to achieve a clear understanding of what constitutes best practice in meeting the various learning needs of all abilities and age groups;
 - ii. sharing existing good practice in the school;

- iii. ensuring that teachers know the success criteria they will look for to make judgements about students' progress towards the achievement of challenging learning targets;
 - iv. clarifying and sharing learning intention with the students, particularly in kindergarten and primary classes;
 - v. providing a range of suitable resources in each curricular area so that teachers can deliver interactive practical learning;
 - vi. enabling all students to use ICT regularly to support their independent learning and research skills; and
 - vii. increasing the number of books in the library for students to use for research purposes.
4. Improve provision and outcomes in the KG classes by:
- i. increasing material and human resources with age-appropriate educational toys, play materials and a teaching assistant in every class;
 - ii. providing a covered indoor play area with suitable play equipment; and
 - iii. increasing the KG teaching hours in compliance with the regulations.