



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



Summary Inspection Report

Emirates National Private School - Al Ain

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Emirates National Private School Al Ain

Inspection Date	25 th – 28 th November 2012
School ID#	154
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	American and International Baccalaureate
Number of Students	1,448
Age Range	3 – 17 years
Gender	Boys and Girls
Principal	Nicolaas van Blerk
School Address	Al Ain City Campus, PO Box 69392, Al Ain, UAE
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Introduction

The school was inspected by five inspectors. They observed 98 lessons, conducted 29 interviews with staff, students and others, including parents. They examined the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, key policy documents and performance data. Observations were also made at the beginning and end of the day and during breaks and assemblies.

Description of the School

The school was established in 2006. It is situated in the City of Al Ain. The school is a member of a group of three schools, two of which are in Abu Dhabi. The school aims to attract local Emirati students.

This campus has four separate schools, one to accommodate kindergarten (KG) children, one for primary students (Grades 1 – 5), one for secondary aged boys (Grades 6 – 11) and one for secondary aged girls (Grades 6 – 11). Grade 5 students are taught in one of the two secondary buildings. The campus director has been in post for sixteen months. He is the fourth director in six years. The school was last inspected in April 2010. There are 1,448 students at the school, of whom 363 are in the kindergarten and 759 in the primary school. Of the remaining 326 students, 208 students attend the secondary boys' school and 118, the girls' school. The school is expected to reach full capacity of approximately 3000 students. There are 859 boys and 589 girls at the school. Most students, 94%, are from the UAE; the others, in very small proportions are from a range of other countries. Nearly all students (98%), are Muslim and 98% are Arab. There are very few students (less than 1%) identified as having special educational needs. The students' socio-economic backgrounds are generally above average. The admissions policy clearly identifies the criteria for entry into Grade 1, which includes an assessment in literacy and numeracy. Fees range from 19,760 AED in KG to 46,980 AED in Grade 11. These fees are in the highest category. Teachers' salaries range from 12,100 AED per month for staff with minimum graduate qualifications rising to 14,800 AED per month. An end of service gratuity is also paid. The school has a mission, which is to 'create internationally minded leaders, by providing an excellent education through modern methods and technology.'

The Effectiveness of the School

Band B

Grade 5

Inspectors judged Emirates National School, Al Ain to be in Band B, that is a Satisfactory school.

The previous inspection took place in April 2010. Inspectors judged the school to be satisfactory, but at risk. It recommended that the owner and senior management raise standards in English, mathematics and science by improving assessment of students' progress against international standards. It asked the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning by raising teachers' expectations for all students. The school was also asked to improve curriculum provision, the quality of leadership and management.

Since this inspection, a new campus director has been appointed who has been in post for just over a year. The senior management team, recently strengthened, is more settled and staff turnover has reduced. There has been improvement in all areas. Students' personal development, and the way the school provides protection, care, guidance and support for its students and leadership and management are now satisfactory and improving. Overall the school is now satisfactory.

There is still further to go in raising standards. Benchmarking against international standards has been implemented. Teaching has improved as a result of training, but is inconsistent. Teaching is not as good as the school evaluates it to be. The curriculum is now better defined and there is strong consensus within the senior management team about the methodologies used to promote student learning. The professional development of staff is good and teacher performance is monitored. The school has a clear vision for the future. The application of this vision is not fully implemented. This results in continued weaknesses in key aspects of the school's practice, particularly the uneven quality of teaching and learning.

Overall, standards are broadly average when matched against international benchmarks. Progress is satisfactory. There are differences in progress between subjects and age-ranges. This is because assessment is not used to identify gaps and weaknesses in students' learning.

Children enter KG with abilities expected for their age. They make good progress and quickly learn the classroom routines. They take responsibility for tasks they have chosen to do. From a low starting point in their use of English, they make good progress in speaking and listening. In mathematics, children make satisfactory progress in counting, shape recognition and measures.

As students move through primary grades they make satisfactory progress in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and thinking. In information communication technology (ICT), skills are below average because they are not systematically developed and used in day-to-day learning.

From Grade 6, the progress made by most girls is generally satisfactory and improving. By contrast, the progress made by many of the boys is unsatisfactory. The more able and less able groups of students and those whose English is weak, generally make unsatisfactory progress.

By the time students reach Grade 11, attainment is average in Arabic. There is room for improvement in extended writing. In Islamic studies, attainment is average and students can recite parts of the Holy Quran. They have a satisfactory understanding of how the principles of Islam impact on their daily lives. Assessments in mathematics indicate attainment is broadly in line with international standards. In social studies, attainment is above average and students have a good understanding of culture in the UAE and Arabic world in general. Students' progress is satisfactory or better in all of these subjects. In English, attainment is below average and progress is unsatisfactory. Skills in reading and extended writing are not developing fast enough. In science, although satisfactory progress is made, attainment falls to just below average.

Attainment in Physical Education (PE), music, art and personal and social development is broadly average. Progress in each of these areas is satisfactory.

Students' personal development is satisfactory and improving. Although behaviour can be good, especially in KG and the girls' school, there are lessons in primary and the boys' school where some students are restless, noisy and disrespectful. Boys' poor behaviour impacts negatively on their learning. Students say that behaviour is improving since the arrival of the new campus director. In lessons where students are encouraged to participate and develop their skills of enquiry and reflection, they grow in confidence and have positive attitudes towards their work. Students respect the values of the UAE and show a good understanding of different cultures. This is evident from preparations for UAE National Day, assemblies and social studies lessons. Opportunities to develop personal qualities through extra-curricular activities are limited in scope and number. Guidance to prepare students for the next stage of their education or employment is unsatisfactory, sometimes creating unrealistic expectations.

Teaching is satisfactory but inconsistent in quality across the school. Where lessons are good, such as in KG and the girls' school, teachers involve students in making decisions about their learning. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and understand strategies that motivate and engage students. In unsatisfactory

lessons, teachers talk too much, they do not ask questions that enable students to think and consider in more depth subject content or opinions. Where teaching is weaker, lessons lack pace and some teachers do not set high enough expectations. Tasks do not always meet the needs of all students in lessons, particularly the more or less able or those whose English is weak. Some teachers lack strategies to motivate students or manage poor behaviour. There has been an improvement in teacher retention and most appear to enjoy their work. Teachers benefit from regular professional development sessions designed to encourage discussion and debate and these are beginning to have an impact on targeted areas such as enquiry-based learning.

The curriculum has satisfactory breadth and balance. The coverage of UAE culture and values is good. Techniques that are in place from KG through to the primary and middle years, result in students being given responsibility for their own learning. This is more secure in KG than elsewhere. In better lessons, students are engaged in discussions about their 'Units of Inquiry'. This motivates students to succeed and helps develop their independent learning skills and personal qualities. This approach is embodied in the school's vision and is in line with the UAE Vision 2030. Not all teachers use this methodology, which impacts negatively on academic progress and personal responsibility. In Grades 10 and 11, the school is working towards accreditation for the International Baccalaureate Diploma. The use of ICT to enhance the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and visits to enrich the curriculum is improving to meet demand.

The protection, care, guidance and support of students are satisfactory and improving. Students, girls in particular, say they feel supported and speak highly of procedures in place.

The site itself is well protected by a high wall and gates staffed by security personnel. Visitors are required to sign in. Contractors on site do not always wear visitors' badges. Staff checks and vetting procedures are fully in place. Actions to prevent bullying are taken seriously and parents are involved when necessary. The four parent-communication officers play a major and effective role in securing good links with parents, ensuring students are appropriately cared for. Attendance is good and absences are followed up in a thorough and organised way. Students are pleased with the way that rewards and sanctions are applied. Prayer facilities are available in each building. Students receive first class medical facilities with a fully equipped clinic at each site. The quality of guidance given to students about options when they leave for other destinations, such as universities, is unsatisfactory.

The four buildings provide a very high standard of accommodation. Rooms are spacious. There are very good facilities to support the curriculum including fully equipped laboratories for the sciences, full size theatres, computer suites and spaces for games and gymnastics. Swimming facilities are outstanding, with a pool in each of the four buildings. The ‘pods’ in each of the buildings provide spacious indoor shaded play areas. The premises and buildings reflect a very good standard of health and safety. KG does not have a purpose designed outdoor learning environment and this has been identified as a future project for the school. Buses are parked safely out of the way of students.

Levels of resources are very good, especially for science. Equipment to support play and investigation in KG is satisfactory. Students are timetabled to use the computer suites and each classroom has at least three computers available. Students do not make enough use of them. There are interactive whiteboards in classrooms, which enhance learning, when used correctly. Book provision is given a great deal of emphasis. A well-organised book fair, held during the inspection, enabled parents to purchase books. The school employs a large number of teaching assistants to support learning in the lower grades. Some assistants are not always usefully deployed. Staffing levels are good although there are currently three vacancies.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The new campus director has brought together an enthusiastic management team who share the school’s vision, and the UAE Vision for 2030. There is a commitment to quality provision, in which students engage and take responsibility for their own learning. There is clear strategic direction from the campus director and the governing advisory board. Planning for improvement is detailed and relevant, but actions are not aligned with costs. Quality training is in place for staff to support their professional development. External standardised tests have been introduced to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in academic performance enabling comparisons with international standards. It is still too early to identify longer-term trends in performance. Roles and responsibilities are defined and there is commitment to continued improvement. The quality of teacher performance is being monitored through lesson observations. The impact of these changes is less secure because lines of accountability for improvement are not clearly defined. The gap between the school’s vision and practice is too wide. There is insufficient monitoring and tough action by managers to assure delivery of the school’s vision. Given the relatively high students fees, balanced against the improvements that are needed, this school provides satisfactory value for money. Work with parents, through events and keeping them informed about their child’s progress and welfare, is good as are health and safety matters and the welfare of students.

Contractual and financial matters are in order and the general condition of the school is very good. The quality of the senior leadership team is convincing; they demonstrate a satisfactory and growing capacity to bring about further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Raise standards and accelerate progress, particularly in English, science, mathematics and ICT by:
 - i. identifying gaps and weaknesses in students' learning from assessment information to address gaps in learning and progression, especially for those students of low and high ability.
2. Make the quality of teaching and learning more consistent by:
 - i. providing training for teachers to challenge and deepen students' thinking and understanding through the use of questioning;
 - ii. increasing the pace of lessons and ensuring that expectations are high enough; and
 - iii. ensuring that all teachers are familiar with strategies to motivate and manage students, especially those whose behaviour is not good enough.
3. In line with the school's vision on technology ensure that students:
 - i. make better use of ICT in their daily lessons so that computers and other equipment becomes an everyday tool for learning.
4. Monitor lessons to ensure that all teachers are using the agreed and recommended teaching and learning practices that foster student engagement, as outlined in the school's vision for the curriculum.
5. Strengthen levels of accountability of leaders who have responsibility for student's progress, raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning.