



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



# Inspection Report

Emirates National School  
Mohammed Bin Zayed City

Academic Year 2013 – 14

Iqraa

Emirates National School – Mohammed Bin Zayed City

|                                |                                                                                  |
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| <b>Inspection Date</b>         | 5 – 8 May 2014                                                                   |
| <b>School ID#</b>              | 105                                                                              |
| <b>Licensed Curriculum</b>     | American, International Baccalaureate (IB)                                       |
| <b>Number of Students</b>      | 2728                                                                             |
| <b>Age Range</b>               | KG to Grade 12                                                                   |
| <b>Gender</b>                  | Mixed                                                                            |
| <b>Principal</b>               | Roy Getchells (Campus Director)                                                  |
| <b>School Address</b>          | PO Box 44321, Abu Dhabi                                                          |
| <b>Telephone Number</b>        | +971 (0)2 559 0000                                                               |
| <b>Fax Number</b>              | +971 (0)2 559 0001                                                               |
| <b>Official Email (ADEC)</b>   | <a href="mailto:emiratesnatmbz.pvt@adec.ac.ae">emiratesnatmbz.pvt@adec.ac.ae</a> |
| <b>School Website</b>          | <a href="http://www.ens.sch.ae">www.ens.sch.ae</a>                               |
| <b>Date of last inspection</b> | 5 – 8 November 2012                                                              |

## The overall effectiveness of the school

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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)

|                                     |                |                |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>The School was judged to be:</b> | <b>BAND C;</b> | <b>GRADE 6</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|

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### The main strengths of the school are:

- the importance the school gives to promoting the heritage, culture and values of the UAE through displays, lessons and its impressive museum
- effective strategies to promote reading in English and Arabic for students in the Kindergarten (KG) and in the primary school
- staff and students enjoy good relationships in most parts of the school
- wide ranging facilities for sports, games and cultural events
- a strong, productive and effective relationship between the school leadership and the managing board of directors.

### The main areas for improvement are:

- the speed at which students make progress in the core subjects
  - the quality of teaching and learning; too many lessons are overly teacher led and do not embrace the principles of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum
  - the inconsistent use of effective behaviour management strategies, particularly by staff in the boys' school
  - the need for greater awareness and provision for those students who find learning easy and those that find learning difficult
  - the capacity of senior and middle managers and curriculum coordinators to fully implement the many recent curriculum changes.
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## Introduction

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The school was inspected by 6 inspectors. They observed 107 lessons and met with the campus Director, school principals and other school leaders. Inspectors also met with members of the advisory board, subject coordinators, teachers, students and parents. In addition, 72 parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed and students' work was examined. Inspectors observed students arriving and leaving school, attended lessons and assemblies and watched students during break times. The inspectors scrutinized school policies and procedures. They looked at school documentation on finance and administration, information on assessments and curriculum and lesson planning.

## Description of the School

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The school is located in Mohammed Bin Zayed city and occupies one large site with separate buildings for KG, primary, girls' secondary and boys' secondary. Since its foundation it has been governed by a board of directors on behalf of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs. The campus Director has been in place since 2009 and works closely with the school's Board of Directors to manage the school alongside the senior leadership team.

The school aims to prepare 'future leaders through innovation in education and treasuring of cultural heritage'. Approximately 98% of students are local UAE nationals and all are Muslim. There are 2728 students, 55% are boys; 544 in kindergarten (KG), 1,384 in primary, 582 in the middle school, 96 in the secondary girl's school and 122 in the parallel boy's school. There is 1 student with identified special educational needs (SEN); the school does not recognize students as gifted or talented.

In Grade 1 and above students are admitted on the basis of their performance in oral and written assessments in English and mathematics. Fees start at AED 21,610 for children in KG, rising to AED 49,240 by Grade 12.

The school is currently running an American curriculum. It is also integrating full International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes from primary through to diploma. By Grade 12, students sit American Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) in English and mathematics as well as Ministry of Education (MoE) exams in Arabic and Islamic education. American Advanced Placement (AP) exams are offered in a few subjects.

## The Effectiveness of the School

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### Students' attainment & progress

Standards of work in English, mathematics and science are below international expectations at all ages. When they enter KG, children have little experience of the English language. They achieve a reasonable basic vocabulary in spoken English as they progress through KG. They develop few phonic skills with which to try new and unfamiliar words in their reading. By the time students reach the middle school in Grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 nearly all boys are on average three years or more behind their international peers. Girls are on average two to three years behind. For many students this gap widens as they progress into the upper grades. At Grade 12, students take no internationally standardized tests in the school. Students sit for these tests outside the school. Students throughout the secondary school rely heavily on private tuition to achieve a sufficient standard to secure an offer from a university outside the UAE.

Students make a satisfactory start in developing their skills in the Arabic language and in Islamic education. Most students in the early years are aware of Islamic values and can memorize short verses from the Holy Qur'an. Many make satisfactory progress in the early grades forming letters accurately and developing skills in creative writing. A Grade 2 student produced work of such quality that his short self-illustrated story in Arabic was published in book form. As students move into the middle school, progress slows. Much of their earlier confidence disappears and their skills in reading Arabic and Islamic texts are underdeveloped.

Systems for the assessment of student progress are improving providing increasingly systematic and consistent approaches in each part of the school. Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) tests are used systematically throughout the school, starting in KG. These tests provide broad indications of progress by cohorts and individual students. They are less successful in providing information on the skills, knowledge and understanding that students are acquiring and where gaps in learning may be hindering progress. Nearly all students are offered places at university, with the help of the external private tuition. Most Grade 12 girls find places at universities within Abu Dhabi, whilst most boys gain places at universities in the USA. Many of these places are on foundation courses. The school has no data as to how many of the male students are accepted on to full graduate programmes.

Students show limited development of those skills that will equip them for a rigorous academic life at a modern university. The school provides insufficient opportunities for them to develop critical or higher order thinking skills through research and independent study.

## **Students' personal development**

Students' personal development is satisfactory. They have the confidence to engage with adults, and the girls in particular talk about their life in school with admirable frankness. Students display good awareness of what it means to be a citizen of the UAE. They have a good understanding of, and value, the traditions and culture of their country. Their experience of the backgrounds and cultures of students from other nationalities is limited.

Most students behave well and conduct themselves in a mature and responsible manner as they move around the school. A small but significant number of boys in the secondary school do not show respect for their teachers and are disruptive in lessons. They show no keenness for learning and, as a consequence, make very unsatisfactory progress.

The limited way in which the curriculum is often presented to older students limits proper development of their personal and social skills. They have too few opportunities to undertake leadership roles, work in collaboration, and learn practically about rights and responsibilities.

## **The quality of teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.

Teachers are well qualified for the subjects they teach and have a clear understanding of the standards that students need to reach within their subject and grade. Most are able to develop positive relationships with students and are committed to the profession. The school has been successful in securing a marked reduction in teacher turnover in the current academic year. Teachers benefit from regular professional development. Many have yet to translate their understanding of the nature of an 'inquiry led curriculum' into effective classroom practice.

Many teachers struggle to apply the principles of inquiry based learning into their planning for lessons. Too often they rely on lengthy introductions that restrict the time that students could work collaboratively or undertake research. A few teachers do not have strong classroom management skills. Strategies for managing the behavior of students in the classroom are inconsistent. Teachers do not always make the purpose of lessons clear; confusing planned activities with intended learning. As a result, plenary sessions, when they occur, focus on completing work rather than understanding what has been learnt.

In most classes teachers make little provision for those students who complete their work quickly and accurately and those who find learning difficult. Teachers have assessment information from previous MAP tests. This gives them little detailed knowledge of each student's strengths and weaknesses. Informal and

focused assessments are infrequent so that teachers rarely have satisfactory knowledge on which to plan extension or catch-up activities. As a result, more able students are not presented with the level of challenge that will excite them as learners or enhance their progress. The school acknowledges only 1 student with SEN. There are, however, other students who are either undiagnosed or not identified. The school works hard with parents to ensure that individual needs are met; this is not always successful. This leads to some children with challenging behavior not getting the support they deserve and acting in a disruptive manner in classrooms that is to the detriment of other learners.

### **Meeting students' needs through the curriculum**

The implementation of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to introduce all the key elements of the IB curriculum over the past three years. There is now a strong framework on which they could build academic success and equip students for leading roles in the modern world. The impact of this work is not seen in what is happening in many classrooms. Programmes of study are largely teacher led and do not fully support the principles of inquiry and creativity on which the IB curriculum is based. The curriculum clearly defines challenging and relevant targets, but students rarely possess the English language skills that would enable them to be successful. Staff in the primary school, successfully foster a love of reading through competitions and well organized book events.

The school provides insufficient opportunities for students to act or learn independently. There are few organized trips for younger students and older boys to enhance the curriculum and even fewer for girls. There are an adequate number of electives for students as they reach the senior school, although their ability to follow all 3 sciences is restricted. The school is successful in giving its students a comprehensive understanding of UAE family and community values and some older students have raised money to support the work of the Red Crescent.

### **The protection, care, guidance and support of students**

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for its students. When in school they are safe from harassment and bullying. The Child Protection policy has not been fully explained to all staff to enable them to take appropriate action if necessary. The school provides a welcoming learning environment for younger students who enjoy their classrooms and play areas.

Attendance is generally above average at 94% throughout the school but dips slightly in the senior grades. Punctuality is weak with many students arriving in all parts of the school during or after assembly. Lateness is noted in the primary

school and late slips are issued. This has little impact on future patterns of behavior. In the boys' school many students arrive in school late and go unchallenged. Some senior boys conducted an effective anti-smoking campaign inside and outside the school. Overall insufficient attention is given to planning what students' need to know in order to lead a healthy lifestyle.

### **The quality of the school's buildings and premises**

Buildings and premises are satisfactory. The school occupies a very large campus and security is vigilant and effective in all areas. The maintenance of the buildings and fabric of the school are efficiently overseen by the school's management board. The school's accommodation supports the delivery of the curriculum; some rooms in KG are too small and restrict opportunities for active learning. The quality of displays around the school varies greatly. Some displays of work in Arabic and of the heritage and culture of the UAE are impressive but in many of the classrooms little current student work is attractively displayed.

In some areas, discarded and broken furniture provides a poor reflection on the school's overall standards. Lifts are available at various points in the school. Not all are working so that access for students or adults with restricted mobility is limited.

### **The school's resources to support its aims**

The school is adequately resourced. It employs a large number of staff who are deployed effectively in line with their skills and experience. There are good facilities for sports and games and for children and students to play. The many theatre spaces are well equipped and provide a good environment where students can practice and hone their performance skills. Library resources are adequate and provide a good range of books in both Arabic and English. Students rarely work alone to pursue projects or undertake research.

There are insufficient resources to support the practical and investigative aspects of the science curriculum. Students have very limited access to digital technologies in the classroom. A few older students bring their own laptops and tablets into school; this provides an uneven experience of the curriculum for all students. These deficiencies put a restriction on teachers and students as they attempt to successfully implement the IB curriculum.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The leadership of the school has been relentless in driving curriculum reform and the associated strengthening of assessment procedures over the last few years. This has required a great deal of energy and commitment from staff at all levels. These have yet had limited impact on classroom practice. The management board

are very well informed about the work of the school and provide good support and guidance to the Campus Director. There is good communication between the board and the director to ensure effective school governance.

The process of self-evaluation is not well understood by many staff. It is insufficiently school-wide to provide an accurate or rigorous understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Judgments made against the performance standards lack sufficient support from the available evidence. There is an appropriate school development plan in place. It is not sufficiently informed by an accurate analysis of the quality of the school's work.

The speed and impact of change has been a significant challenge to senior and middle managers. Some managers and leaders have lacked the capacity to drive through and implement the changes in the timescale required. Not all curriculum leaders have similar roles. There is insufficient consistency in their workloads and responsibilities. There has been an exhaustive programme of professional development but little time for the results of this to be observed in classroom practice. Curriculum leaders have not been able to provide the time to mentor staff or model the desired changes.

The school's leadership nurtures a school community committed to the heritage, culture and values of the UAE. In this regard it meets the aspirations and expectations of its parents and students. Parents speak highly of the school, value the work it does and are very loyal to its aims.

### **Progress since the last inspection**

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This school has initiated a considerable change in curriculum in the last two years and that change is not yet complete. The school has gained authorization to follow the IB Primary Years Program (PYP), Middle Years Program (MYP) and is currently in the final stages of gaining authorization for the Diploma Program (DP) that will be aligned with the American Common Core curriculum to the IB standards. This agenda for change demonstrates a determination to bring about improvement. This has put considerable pressure on staff at all levels. In this context the school has not made the progress recommended by the last inspection report. The quality of teaching has not improved sufficiently to ensure a significant rise in academic standards.

The school has not made satisfactory progress in meeting the needs of students who are gifted and talented or in developing the learning skills called for by the IB curriculum. There are still deficiencies in the resourcing of science and ICT.

The school has made progress in implementing the MAP testing regime. This provides the school with useful data to measure the progress of cohorts of

students as well as individuals. The school now conducts a useful and informative programme of ‘walkthroughs’ that also provides much useful information on what is happening in classrooms. This still does not provide school leaders in-depth understanding of the quality of teaching and learning, and evaluate the impact of professional development on classroom practice.

The school has not demonstrated that it has the satisfactory capacity, particularly at middle leadership level, to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards quickly enough without external support.

### **What the school should do to improve further:**

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1. Improve the rate of progress students make, especially in core subjects and the quality of teaching and learning to meet the requirements of the IB programme by:
  - i. making the desired learning outcomes of lessons clear so that students and teachers can better assess the progress students are making
  - ii. increasing the level of challenge for more able students
  - iii. providing the mentoring and coaching that will better enable teachers to design and deliver an ‘inquiry based’ curriculum
  - iv. increasing the capacity of middle and senior managers to deliver the IB curriculum
  - v. strengthening the role of middle managers to enable them to play a more effective role in leading their sections.
2. Make better provision for those students who have additional learning needs by:
  - i. having clear classroom strategies for managing the needs of students with unsatisfactory behaviour
  - ii. providing targeted and specialist support inside and outside the classroom and setting clear targets and monitoring progress regularly.
3. Providing resources to ensure effective delivery of the IB curriculum by:
  - i. improving resources in science so that students are able to take part in the full range of practical and investigative activities
  - ii. providing more access to digital technologies in the classroom.

## Inspection Grades

|                                                                    | Band A<br>High performing |           |      | Band B<br>Satisfactory   |              | Band C<br>In need of significant improvement |                     |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------|--------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|
| Performance Standard                                               | 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             |                           |           |      |                          |              |                                              |                     |      |