



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



Summary Inspection Report

Emirates Private School

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Iqraa

Emirates Private School

Inspection Date	6 th – 9 th May, 2012
School ID#	032
Type of School	Private
Curriculum	Ministry of Education, American, and British
Number of Students	1711
Age Range	Kindergarten- Grade 12
Gender	Mixed
Principal	Amina Abdulla Al Khalaf
School Address	PO Box 2564, Muroor Road, Zafranna District, Shabiat Khalifa
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Introduction

The school was inspected by 5 inspectors. The inspectors observed 83 lessons. During the time in school, inspectors considered the school ethos, the quality of students' learning experiences, personal development, progress and the teaching they receive.

Description of the School

The Emirates Private School (EPS) is part of the Emirates Group. It opened in 1982 aiming to provide excellent education for all students. It is in the Zafrana District of Abu Dhabi. Its vision is that all programmes should develop individual personality and produce promising graduates who serve the country and are ready to face global challenges to the best of their ability. There are 1,711 students, 1032 of whom are boys and 679 girls. The student population is diverse. The largest student group is Emirati (38.8%) with Egyptians (25.6%), Sudanese (4.5%), Jordanian (4.3%), Syrian (3.8%), Yemenis (3.8%), Palestinians (3.0%), Pakistani (2.0%), Somalis (1.5%) and Lebanese (1.4%) making up the remainder. The school population is 98.8% Muslim. The school is selective, with examinations for entry to all grades and curriculum types. If students do not reach entry standards, they have the opportunity of starting in a lower grade. This is counter to ADEC's policy of age-appropriate placement. The school has identified a small percentage of students as needing special support because of their low levels of proficiency in the language used for teaching. Four students have specific special educational needs.

School fees range from 7,590 AED in Kindergarten (KG) through to 9,500 AED for Primary, 12,070 AED for Middle and 14,375 AED for Upper School students. Teachers' annual salaries range from 26,000 to 84,000 AED and the average is 30,000 AED.

The campus accommodates three schools. The Kindergarten has 302 students. The Emirates section has 358 students studying the Emirates U.A.E. Curriculum approved by the Ministry of Education. The British and American section prepares its 1051 students for the British International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), AS and A level education from Cambridge and London University and the American curriculum approved by The Commission on International and Trans – Regional Accreditation (CITA).

The school is a family run business. A brother and sister own the school with the latter also its principal.

The Effectiveness of the School

Band C

Grade 6

Inspectors judged the Emirates Private School (EPS) to be in Band C, that is, a school in need of significant improvement.

The last inspection of EPS in March 2010 also placed the school in significant need of improvement. The school is currently in breach of Article 7 of the By-Laws of Private Education 2001 regarding the role of the owner in the day-to-day running of the school. This arrangement means that there is no impartial body to assist the principal in monitoring the effectiveness of the school and establishing its strategic direction.

In March 2010, inspectors set a number of improvement targets for the school. It has not addressed all of these targets. The school has made improvements to the building and the safeguards it provides for student health and safety. The banners covering the outside space in KG affords satisfactory protection from the sun. The newly constructed KG suite now provides an attractive learning environment that supports the curriculum well.

The improved provision for information technology (IT), including a new computer suite, has increased the opportunities for independent learning amongst the older students. This is reinforced by these students bringing their own laptop computers into school. Further IT developments are in place but not yet operational. For instance, two new interactive whiteboards await use following staff training scheduled for June.

Safety on the school buses is good due to effective measures to monitor and supervise journeys. A GPS system tracks students' homeward journeys and enables the school to be aware of the safe progress of the buses and their location at all times. In addition, supervisors travel on all buses and, as a result, poor behaviour is rare.

The School Improvement Plan is in place and the school has reviewed it but self-evaluation lacks rigour. The plan does not cover how the school will formally measure, analyse and record progress towards its targets. Current informality in these processes means that the school cannot ensure robust and incisive plans. The dedicated management team meets daily. They discuss initiatives and progress and support curriculum leaders. Managers, curriculum leaders and a consultant carry out lesson observations and the latter sets individual teacher targets. The school reviews targets annually. They inform the performance management process. Teachers feel supported and assisted by this process, but there is no formal, agreed and shared policy for observation and review. The lack of well-understood and applied procedures and processes means that the quality

of lesson observation is inconsistent and there are limited opportunities to share good practice. This means that leaders' good intent does not translate into a fully realised whole school approach and such monitoring does not drive improvement as effectively as it could.

The school has implemented an accurate tracking system. All of the management team are aware of test outcomes and have a realistic picture of student achievement. They are proud of the positive progress trends. The manager with responsibility for data has begun to work with curriculum leaders in order to equip them to use the data. In turn, work is underway to assist teachers in using data to plan and address individual student needs. These are valuable initiatives, which will need further time to embed and show impact. Teachers' marking of student work is superficial and fails to inform students about what they need to do to improve.

The school has seen mixed outcomes following professional development training on differentiating teaching to meet varied needs. Some teachers in secondary grades now plan for a greater variety of learning activities, promote the development of independent learning skills, and challenge more able students through higher order questioning. In these classes, teachers meet students' needs more effectively, learning is more enjoyable and the resultant student enthusiasm is evident. Too few teachers have done this, especially in the lower grades and in Arabic generally. Consequently, progress is unsatisfactory in these areas.

Standards in the school have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory overall. The school compares results and outcomes to the best international practice. Where international benchmarks are absent, it makes comparisons with schools following the local curriculum. There are no significant differences between the progress made by students following the American, MoE or British Curriculum. The school is selective and, with the exception of KG, all students sit entrance examinations. The entry requirements are high but the school does not take sufficient account of this when setting targets. Consequently, all students are insufficiently challenged, particularly the gifted and talented students.

Results for G12 and 13 students in the UK curriculum A & AS level exams are in line with the average. At IGCSE they are slightly above average. The school benchmarks the American Curriculum to Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL); this helps teachers and students to track the progress of non-native speakers of English against standards which apply to American universities. During the academic year 2010/11, the maths department focused on underachieving students. This identification, coupled with an effective

intervention strategy, resulted in significant improvement for all students in the identified group. The school has not embedded this practice throughout. Given the starting points of most students, teachers' expectations are not sufficiently high and, despite improvement, average outcomes in examination results demonstrate unsatisfactory progress for many

Overall, despite a variable pattern of outcomes showing some satisfactory and even some above average attainment and progress in some areas for some students, the school is not securing satisfactory rates of progress for students as a whole. It is in recognition of this issue that the school has begun to examine why gifted and talented students are not making better progress.

Whilst the taught time is now appropriate and there is good support for non-Arabic speaking students, progress in Islamic studies is unsatisfactory. This is because the formal, whole class teaching does not facilitate effective learning for the diverse student groups in each lesson. For example, teachers often miss opportunities to motivate students through purposeful debate on morals and values.

KG students make satisfactory progress. Students have improved access to ICT and benefit from a greater experience of practical learning activities and explorative play. Their progress in the development of learning skills through outdoor activity is limited.

In grades 1 to 5, standards are variable. Where teaching is good, the students engage in a variety of tasks and receive suitable challenge; they undertake group work and discuss their findings. Overall, however, too few teachers appropriately match the range of activities to student needs in order to maximise progress. In addition, although students are keen to learn and listen intently, teachers often provide limited opportunities for students to express their views. Such lessons are unsatisfactory because of the limited assessment opportunities available to teachers. Thus, it is impossible to determine student progress or adapt teaching accordingly and this inhibits learning.

By the end of Grade 9, most students have made satisfactory progress in problem solving, particularly in mathematics where they show they can interpret and apply formal definitions and generalisations and connect and apply mathematical ideas. Their numeracy and mathematical competence is satisfactory.

In literacy and English, Grades 1-9 follow a commercially produced scheme and reach satisfactory standards. By Grade 9 most can speak English with versatility and clarity and use the language for a range of purposes.

From Grade 6 upwards students receive tuition in single sex classes. In all core subjects, girls slightly outperform boys.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are committed to the school and the students' development. For example, they make themselves available to the older grades through text messages, which enable support for homework or preparation for examinations.

The curriculum is very broad offering a wide range of options. The school strives to deliver three different, but sometimes overlapping curricula, British, American and MoE and this results in an overcomplicated curriculum which is difficult to monitor and resource. Parents choose the section their child attends with many local students opting for the traditional Arabic curriculum. Local students are able to choose the British or American curriculum if their language skills are good enough. Standards in the Arabic section are lower than those in the American/British section. Consequently, some high achieving local students do not receive the most appropriate education to match their capabilities.

The breadth of the curriculum does offer many opportunities and students take on responsibility and become confident, articulate young people. Again, there is inconsistency as this is more prevalent in the American/British section. From first grade, students enjoy French, art, music, IT and PE. There is clear progression in music with students singing part songs and playing musical instruments.

The school addresses students' awareness of the traditions of the UAE appropriately in social studies and reinforces it through song in music. In addition to National Day, students take part in special days for science, careers and the environment, which all enrich the curriculum. Through activities such as clean-up campaigns, recycling and environmental exhibitions, students have developed an active sense of protection and care for their environment.

Older students have a range of electives, which is complementary to the core curriculum. Good career advice enhances the curriculum in the American/British section and students gain an understanding of what they have to achieve to gain entry to university. The school does not document destination data so it is unclear whether students from all sections of the school make appropriate choices.

Students' personal development is strength of the school. All students feel supported and speak with pride about the opportunities and care they receive at EPS. Students of all ages lead school assemblies and they develop a clear understanding of their cultural heritage and UAE history. They proudly contribute artefacts from their own countries of origin for exhibition in the Heritage Centre. The new School Council consists of members elected from each class. They focus on organising social and cultural events for the parents' evenings. Students show

considerable respect for each other and for staff. The school is a harmonious community with a good level of care. There is an insignificant amount of poor behaviour. The school deals effectively with the few incidents that do occur.

The doctors and nurses have up to date records of the health issues of all students. They liaise closely with teachers and there are very clear lines of communication. Supervisors maintain attendance records each day in all grades and for each lesson. The school has effective systems in place to notify parents of first day absences and as a result, attendance is good.

The building provides a safe, well-maintained environment. Students treat the building with respect. They appreciate the space for KG and the new boys' mosque. The building complies with health and safety regulations. The school stores chemicals safely.

The Principal is dedicated to the education and welfare of all students. She visits classes regularly, students greet her warmly and she maintains an active awareness of all school activities. Staff welcome her supportive approach and as a result, teacher retention rates are high. However, senior leadership is not sufficiently explicit about the expectations of colleagues. For example, there is no defined timeline to enable staff to be clear about the implementation date of new initiatives. In addition, there is an important need to formalise expectations in shared, agreed, school policies and detailed job descriptions. This is so that leaders can hold staff accountable for their responsibilities and so effectively underpin the drive for improvement. Teachers appreciate and value professional development but the school does not have sufficiently well developed monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure the maximum impact from training and observation outcomes. The absence of an independent board limits the opportunity for external challenge and the evaluation of proposals.

The school demonstrates some capacity to improve but further improvements in key areas need rapid attention. Compliance with regulations for appropriate degrees of separation between the school's leadership team and board remains an urgent and pressing matter for action. The school currently gives unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further:

1. Urgently address the non-compliance issues, which exist in the school's governance and leadership and management. In particular, Article 7 of the By-Laws of Private Education 2001.
2. Establish a board of governors who have the necessary skills, expertise and degree of separation to guide and monitor the school's leaders and managers in their work.
3. Define roles and responsibilities through the provision of clear job descriptions and agreed, shared policies and procedures, particularly for classroom observation, in order to define accountability for all.
4. Use individual student assessment data effectively to ensure that teachers plan for differentiated, challenging tasks that meet the learning needs of all groups of students.
5. Improve the quality of teachers' marking in class books in order that teachers and individual students can have valuable dialogue about learning and students know exactly how to improve their work.
6. Ensure that parents receive clear advice, prior to students' admission, in order that they follow an appropriate curriculum, related to their entry level.
7. Ensure that the curriculum is equitable throughout and meets the needs of all students.
8. Improve school development planning by including and consistently implementing methodology for rigorous monitoring, evaluation and analysis of progress towards targets in order to ensure robust and accurate self-evaluation.